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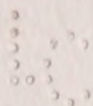
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The Jealous Mrs. Simkins

BY

EVERARD ROBERTS



The Knickerbocker Press
New York

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CHAPTER I

Love not alone on beauty looks, but where he loves,
And deems her beautiful beyond compare
Who in all others' eyes is homely called.

"The Disconsolate Monarch."

IN the early part of the eighteenth century there stood near the hamlet of Haddonhill, in the County of Warwick, a large rambling old house built of stone. Chateau-like in part, it had been added to by several succeeding owners, all of whom, while following out their own ideas, had yet preserved the architectural features of the original.

The founder of the old chateau—a Marquis de Courcey, to escape the persecutions of which he had become a victim, had fled his native France, and settled here for good and the better enjoyment of that serenity which his own country denied him.

The date of erection of the original structure was unknown; even tradition, that usually prolific but unsatisfactory source of information, remained silent on the subject.

That ancient protector, the moat, which had been many years dry and was now overgrown with rank herbage, encircled it. The drawbridge, too, which, swung its weather-beaten and decaying timbers across, no longer squeaked its opposition to the porter's will.

A vigorous growth of ivy covered its walls on two sides, and in some instances partly concealed the windows from view, while oaks of great girth of trunk

and spread of limb, which were reputed to be several centuries old, stood guardian-like on either side. Standing upon an eminence at some distance from the highway, it became at once a conspicuous feature in the landscape of that section of country, and embraced from its turrets a view of many miles round.

The house itself was in a tolerably good state of preservation, but the grounds, and the wall surrounding the grounds, from want of attention had gone to decay. Even the more recently constructed porter's lodge adjoining the main gateway had not outlasted its more ancient neighbor, and but for its location gave little evidence of what it had once been.

The family had long been extinct, but the family escutcheon, as if defying the all-destroying hand of Time, still stood out sharp and clear in stone above the main portal.

Connected with the place were many dismal stories which passed current among credulous believers; great indeed was the fear in which the country folk stood of it.

It was asserted, and readily believed among them, that the form of a woman in ghostly attire had been plainly seen gliding beneath the shade of the oaks mentioned.

Others had observed the self same figure standing in the turret at the dead hour of night, straining as if to catch a sight of one for whom she looked.

Be this as it may, the chateau and grounds, for many years untenanted, had passed by purchase into

possession of Mrs. Septimus Simkins—who was not of a nature to be frightened with tales of that kind—and she and her husband now occupied it.

An extremely jealous woman was Mrs. Simkins, and the purchasing of this property was its outcome, for she hoped her husband would find here such recreation as would forever remove from his mind all thought of London, its gaiety and its frivolity, of which, she imagined, he had become inordinately fond.

But never was woman more mistaken. Simkins, poor man, worried as he was by the incessant accusations of his better half, cared as little for the pleasures of London life, as perhaps, did any man who dwelt there.

But two years married, there had existed during that time what may appropriately be called, a cat and dog feeling between them. On his part it existed secretly and without demonstration; true, every now and then, being provoked past endurance, he would exhibit some little ebullition of spirit, only to subside again a few moments later into quiet submissiveness.

Did Mr. Simkins walk, Mrs. Simkins would needs walk too, and when he would beg a little privacy in which to arrange matters relating to his own private affairs, she would avow it to be but an excuse for the furtherance of schemes in opposition to his marriage vows. Indeed, her jealousy had lately grown to such proportions that Simkins, meek and humble in dis-

position though he was—having heretofore yielded in all things to the wishes, not to say whims, of his wife—had again resolved to consider the question of her cure, or failing which, to seek a separation. This time seriously, and with a determination to push the matter to a definite conclusion.

Mrs. Simpkins was on the shady side of fifty. Tall and angular, she stood head and shoulders above her husband; indeed, in no particular was there any similarity between them. Wrinkled she was beyond her years, with deep-set eyes, which moved restlessly as she gazed through, and often over, a pair of golden spectacles which rested on the bridge of her parrot-beaked nose. A square and heavy chin punctuated a face as remarkable for its strength as for its lack of those qualities; the attributes of feminine comeliness.

Not to particularize, her general appearance and demeanor indicated the possession of an unbounded self-esteem and assurance, and a will which was subservient to but one person in the world, and that person herself.

Indeed, it was long a matter of discussion among Simkins's friends and acquaintances what he could possibly have seen in Mrs. Simkins to induce him to marry her.

Some hinted vaguely of an impaired mental condition, some spoke of the transforming power of money, through which she had appeared to his eyes an object beautiful: others thought it a clear case of bartering self for pelf, an exchange into which he had

entered with both eyes wide open; while some, more superstitious, insisted she must have given him love powders, an opinion with which Simkins himself finally and firmly coincided.

Whatever may have been the inducement, certain it is Simkins's eyes were now fully open—as they had long been—to the fact that he was married, married, so to speak, to his bread and butter—to a woman in whom his every movement was a source of suspicion, and to prevent which he had often been compelled to tiptoe it in and about the premises.

Yet despite the many worriments which his wife's excessive jealousy occasioned him, he remained very fleshy, smooth-faced, rosy-cheeked and had reached the age of five and thirty.

Of his parentage nothing was known; born he certainly had been, but whether of a duke or a ditch-digger, he possessed not the remotest knowledge. He was found, when an infant, nicely tucked in a basket at the door of a poor, but honest cobbler, whose wife, kind soul, had carefully cared for and brought him up.

The portrait of a gentleman and a paper carefully sealed were discovered with him in the basket, but his foster-parents, poor illiterate souls, could glean nothing from them, and after poring over the writing many times, finally mislaid it and dismissed the matter from their minds.

The portrait, too, had gone the way of the paper, and with them the only hope of establishing his identity, but Simkins was of so sanguine a disposition that

he still harbored the belief that fortune would one day reveal his blue blood, and much pleasure it gave him accordingly.

Deprived of most educational advantages his youth had been spent in the shop and under the austere eye of his foster-father, who spoke but seldom, and then only to be obeyed. An apt scholar in the branch at which he studied he soon became a valuable acquisition, and helped to place many a shilling in the purse of the old shoemaker.

Despite his best efforts, however, our little foundling was ever a good-for-nothing and lazy fellow in the eyes of the old gentleman, who availed himself of every opportunity to tell him so.

Thus wounded in feeling, he more than once resolved to run away, and would have put his resolution into practice but for the kindness of his foster-mother, whom he loved and could not make up his mind to leave. Could he forget the many unmerited strappings he had received, the many times sent supperless to bed? No, nor could he forget the kindness of heart which, unknown to her testy husband, had prompted the old lady—his wife—to steal upstairs and kissing, present him his much needed supper.

But stern foster-father and kind foster-mother had long since passed away and leaving no issue the present Simkins alone lived to perpetuate the name.

Almost his sole inheritance, the outfit of the old shoe-shop, he still preserved in the garret of his present home with the greatest care.

CHAPTER II

Be not in marriage hasty,
Let thy first impressions wear with time.—
Study thou the disposition well of him thou lov'st,
That no discordant element exist
To mar thy future being.

“The Disconsolate Monarch.”

AFTER the death of the old couple, and the consequent closing of the old shoe-shop, the world of London lay all before him. As he walked its busy streets his heart throbbed with expectation of his future greatness. He contemplated his vast prospective wealth and the disposition he should make of it.

What would he not do? He would found hospitals, build churches whose spires should kiss the clouds and bring him fame and immortality.

But Simkins, like many a poor lad before him, soon learned that fortune is not easy of achievement; that the aspirations, the hopes of ardent youth are too often born to die with the experience of a riper age.

Of money he had just five pounds sterling, the thrifty savings of his benefactors, a sum sufficient only for the supplying of his immediate wants. True, he might have realized a trifle on the sale of the effects of the old shop, and other belongings, had he so wished, but the thought, if it occurred to him, was so

base a one, that he at once dismissed it from his mind.

Purchasing a suit of clothes, he started out in search of employment. Securing at last a situation as a lad of all work in a green grocery, he soon incurred the wrath of his master by an error in arithmetic, and was by him unceremoniously discharged. Alas! that so brief an experience can work so great a change in man's aspirations. The sky which before appeared so bright and clear had grown suddenly dim. He saw in the streets many poor fellows, wretched and hungry looking, whom he had not noticed before, and he wondered if they, too, once had had golden dreams. Situation after situation was procured, and lost almost as soon as obtained. A mania for reading had taken possession of him, and the time which should have been devoted to the interests of his employers was thus consumed.

Much of his money, too, was spent on books, many of which he still retained in the library of his present home.

It was long the scoff of his wife that next to his "insignificant self" books were the only portion he had brought her. Nature, evidently, had not fitted him for business pursuits; his was not a disposition to make money, neither could he retain money after it was made; what wonder, therefore, that we now find him in that most embarrassing of positions, a dependent on the means of another, and that, of all persons, his wife; indeed she never hesitated to tell him

that but for her his road to the poor-house would be a short and straight one.

Standing one day in a dingy street before the stall of an old bookseller—his frequent resort—he was accosted by an old gentleman, who often observing his fondness for books, began to feel quite an interest in him. This gentleman, Smithers by name, had many years retired from business. Keeping bachelor's hall he lived in a lavish style in one of the most aristocratic quarters of the city. With him Simkins engaged and found for the first time employment congenial to his tastes.

Possessed of a large library, Simkins was given unrestricted privileges therein, which he failed not to take the utmost advantage of. It was during his stay here that he made the acquaintance of Thomas Tibbins, who became his best and most particular friend during life, and of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter.

Having been accorded the treatment due to a loving son it was but natural he should expect some substantial proof of Mr. Smithers's affection when that old gentleman should die.

This unfortunate event took place ten years after Simkins's advent there, and was caused by falling downstairs while on the way to his chamber after a convivial meeting with his bachelor friends.

Mr. Smithers's will contained no clause specially interesting to Simkins, who now found himself, ex-

cept for books, of which he had purchased a large number, almost as poor as ever.

The friendship of Tibbins now stood him in good need. From him he received board and lodging, pecuniary assistance and counsel. It was during his stay here that he first saw, and was smitten by the lady who afterward became his wife.

Sitting one day alone in the park adjacent to Tibbins's apartments, Miss Tubbs, Simkins avows, espied him, made advances toward him, and carried him off a prize in spite of himself and the oft-repeated protests of his bosom friend, Mr. Tibbins.

A courtship which continued nightly for a period of four weeks ended in their marriage, and after a brief stay in London they removed to the old chateau at Haddonhill, hereinbefore mentioned. Tibbins followed them soon after and settled in the same section of the country some sixteen miles distant.

As stated in the preceding chapter, Simkins had again firmly resolved to cure his wife of her excessive jealousy, and we now find him in his library alone, sitting before a large open fireplace pondering the means whereby the cure is to be effected.

To solve this much vexed question he had the day before despatched a message to his friend Tibbins, soliciting a visit from him. As yet he had not come, nor, indeed, had he any intention of coming; his hatred of woman, and of Mrs. Simkins in particular, would ever act as a bar to any such proceeding.

The clock had just struck eleven. Rising with a

countenance which evidenced dissatisfaction he went to the window, out of which he vainly endeavored to look. All was total darkness. The cold October winds howled dismally as they forced their way through the limbs of the mammoth oaks before him. A storm long brewing, had now commenced in all its fury of wind and rain.

A feeling of deep despondency settled upon him as he again seated himself before the fire and caused him to ponder ills which more than to all others on this earth he believed had been allotted to him. From pondering he fell into a half doze, out of which he was suddenly startled, and observed his wife looking into the room at him from behind the door, which she held partly open.

Believing he had not seen her, she pulled the door gently to and closed it.

Simkins imperceptibly approached the door, and opening it suddenly, Mrs. Simkins fell her length upon the floor.

He assisted her to rise. Recovering from her astonishment she said, that while on the way to her chamber she had been seized with dizziness and leaned against the door for support.

A prettily concocted story, thought Simkins, and though he said nothing he could not repress the smile of incredulity that played over his countenance, which Mrs. Simkins observing, she demanded, "Do you doubt my word, sir?"

"No, madam, no. All is truth you utter, every

word. You wouldn't stoop to such an act as looking through a key-hole. You wouldn't. It isn't characteristic of you, madam. It isn't. Your nature wouldn't suffer you to stoop to such baseness, it wouldn't;" and continuing in this strain for several moments he stood fairly aghast at his own audacity, and the bewilderment of his wife who had never been addressed by him in such a manner before.

Mrs. Simpkins's bewilderment, however, was of very brief duration, and ended with the exclamation: "Call me Madam, will you? I'll Madam you," as she chased after Simpkins round a table in a mad effort to reach him.

The scramble, for such it truly was, resulted only in displacing several books which fell upon the floor and Simkins' fortunate escape from the room while his wife, candle in hand, muttering threats against her husband when she should catch him, wended her way upstairs to bed.

Poor Simkins, what could have possessed him? Did he not know the dignity of Mrs. Simkins could never brook being spoken to in such a manner?

Of course he did, or his experience would have gone for nothing. Waiting till she had fallen asleep he went upstairs in his stockings, listened attentively at the chamber door, entered and stole quietly to bed.

CHAPTER III

Each day shall pattern that it follows;
Each and all a copy to the world
Of wedded bliss immutable.

“The Disconsolate Monarch.”

THE morning dawned bright and clear. The sun had long been up when Simkins awoke. He had passed a miserable night. Every turn and uneasy movement of his wife as she lay in bed had found its vibration in his nervous system, and it was near morning when he fell asleep, from sheer exhaustion. To his great surprise she had already risen and preceded him downstairs, without waking him as was her custom; a circumstance which filled him with the worst suspicions.

Dressing himself quickly he followed, and entering the breakfast room, saw his wife knitting before the fire. She laid aside her work at once and took a seat at the table which was already prepared for breakfast.

Simkins, looking sheepishly at her, did likewise, but his wife studiously averted her gaze, remained silent and commenced to eat in a quick and determined manner. Fipps, one of the servants, who always waited at table during meal hour, was told on this occasion that his services, when wanted, would be called for, and he gladly departed.

Simkins's appetite was poor that morning. For that matter he seemed to not care, whether he ate or

not. Evidently in need of a tonic, his wife was not long in administering one. He was all submission and cast imploring eyes at her, as he would say, "Forgive me, darling, forgive me," yet dared not.

Unable to restrain herself longer, Mrs. Simkins now burst forth with the words, "Well, sir," an exclamation which caused her husband to shake nervously in his seat. "So, sir, after the base attack you made upon me last night, you have the audacity to sit at my table, and not one word of apology from you."

"What shall I say?" inquired Mr. Simkins, humbly.

"What shall you say? Have you no tongue? Where are your books of which you read so much?"

"In the library," replied Simkins, scarcely knowing what he did say.

"Are they?" added she, contemptuously. "In the library, indeed, and what do they teach you I should like to know, but to disrespect me, me, your own lawful, and too loving wife?"

Simkins gave vent to his emotions in sighs.

"And to think that I, Miss Arabella Tubbs, that was, the only surviving daughter and heiress—heiress, mind you—of the late Tobias Tubbs, Esq., tallow chandler and gentleman, should have thrown myself away on you—you, who never had anything attractive about you—you, of all the manikins in the world."

"Why did you marry me?" ventured Simkins.

"For very pity of you," quickly responded Mrs. Simkins, with much acerbity, "nothing more, I as-

sure you, and this is my thanks for it. For this I am accorded the treatment which you are daily giving me, making life miserable for me, and all for those women whom I know you are in constant correspondence with. O, that I might but get some clue to them. Don't speak, sir. Don't contradict me, sir," and gesticulating wildly, she extended her long and bony arm across the table—at this moment as if to aggravate the matter, in his nervousness, Simpkins upset, spreading the contents of the coffee pot which stood near him, upon the table cloth. This incident was immediately and strongly reflected in his wife's countenance, and caused him to hasten toward the door, where, standing and looking at her, he gave innocent and expressionless utterance to the exclamation, "Bah," and left the room.

He was now willing to assume any risk to ameliorate his condition, not excepting even so great a one as that implied by the surreptitious borrowing of his wife's favorite saddle mare. So great, indeed, was Mrs. Simkins's fondness for this animal that she had discarded its purchased name and bestowed upon it her own abbreviated and sweet-sounding substitute, that of "Bella."

Proceeding to the stable he ordered the mare to be saddled at once, intending at all hazards to ride to the house of his friend Tibbins, who had so grievously disappointed him the night before.

For two years, the extent of her ownership, he had never once crossed her back, nor dared he in Mrs.

Simkins's presence suggest such an act. But two alternatives, however, were open to him, that of walking the entire distance to his friend's house, some sixteen or seventeen miles, or the taking of the only remaining animal in the stable, an old cart horse long used in labor on and about the premises.

That Simkins was without a horse that he could call his own, was due entirely to the fear of his wife that the possession of such an animal would open a too easy channel of communication between him and those imaginary female acquaintances, whom she located as residing in that and the adjacent villages, and thus it was, that while Mrs. Simkins was taking her airings he was expected by that lady to remain at home, either in the library or engaged in pruning or planting or overseeing the men at their labor, after which she would regale him with a full account of her drive and its incidents, a method of transmitting pleasure very characteristic of the lady in question.

Everything being in readiness "Bella," clean-limbed and saucy-looking, was led saddled from the stable. Her first glance was at Simkins. Whether she suspected his intentions, or not, her subsequent actions must determine. Certain it is, that, with every attempt to approach her she reared and lunged in so frightful a manner that Simkins even then was disposed to submit to what he called his inevitable fate, and relinquish the journey.

Animated by a spirit of mischief, the stableman urged him to repeated and fruitless efforts to place

his foot in the stirrup. As a final resort "Bella" was led back into the stable where, with the aid of the servant, he at last succeeded in gaining the saddle.

This act accomplished, "Bella" unceremoniously cleared the stable, leaving as a memento of the occasion, Simkins's hat, which was knocked from his head by contact with the door frame.

Having reached the yard she made for the gate at once—which, luckily, was open—and passing thence, proceeded at a galloping pace down the lane in spite of his pulling and whoas to prevent it.

If it be true, as intimated, that Simkins was never intended by nature for business pursuits, it is equally true that that Dame, in her handicraft, had never framed him for the exercise of the saddle.

Imagine a man exceedingly short in stature, and very fleshy, with dumpy legs. Imagine those legs spread out at either side from his body. Imagine him hatless, the perspiration streaming down his fiery colored face without the power to wipe it. Imagine the utter despair as depicted in his countenance, and his efforts to maintain his position. I say, imagine all these, and you have before you as grotesque a figure as can well be imagined. He had ridden two miles already, as yet with very little cessation of speed. Would she never cease running? He had tugged so long and vigorously at the reins that his strength was exhausted. Once it occurred to him to run her headlong into a stone wall by the road-

side, but fearing the consequences to himself of such an act abandoned it.

His condition, bad as he supposed it to have been, was now infinitely worse. How gladly would he exchange it for the worst he had heretofore experienced—wife and all.

Oh! that he had never undertaken this journey, or that he had listened to the advice of his friend and never married, for not to have married was not to have started on this journey, and not to have started on this journey, was not to be in the predicament in which he now found himself.

These and kindred thoughts flashed rapidly across his mind. But it was not intended that he should remain longer in his unpleasant position, coming to a sharp turn in the road, "Bella" suddenly encountered a large drove of cattle that completely blocked the way. Seeing no chance of escape in that direction, she bolted, throwing Simkins head and heels upon the ground. Relieved of her burden "Bella" cast an inquiring glance at him as he lay sprawling in the mire and retracing her steps was soon lost in the distance.

Although bruised he was yet able to rise, which he had to do very quickly, to avoid the cattle that were all but upon him.

The driver, a young lad, was afraid that, as he, or rather his cattle, had been the cause of the accident, the gentleman would be revenged on him for it, but Simkins said nothing to him, and the boy fearing

lest he might change his mind, whipped up his cattle and made off as rapidly as he could.

Simkins was in a dilemma. The distance to the nearest habitation was a full mile at least, a fact which troubled him in no small degree for so chafed was he with hard riding that he could scarcely stand, to say nothing of walking.

He now decided to abandon the trip. Abandon the attempt to cure his wife of her jealousy, at least for the present, and return, if possible, in time to escape the consequences which a discovery of his absence would inevitably bring upon him, but "Bella," what of her? Would she, horse-like, return home, or take it into her stubborn head to seek pastures new, and perhaps never be seen or heard of more.

Selecting a stone by the roadside he sat down to rest and for deliberation, but he soon discovered that deliberation to a man in his predicament was conducive of anything but rest, so as time was passing he concluded to emulate the determination of the boy, Nelson, on his way to school in an almost impossible snow-storm, and regardless of wife and consequences, push on his journey as he best could. Luckily, before proceeding far, he was overtaken by a horse and wagon, whose driver, a rough-looking English lad, replied cheerfully to his salutation, and in answer to his fears, assured him of the gentleness of the animal he was driving.

To be brief, bedraggled as he was, Simkins had the gratification finally of alighting at the gate of his friend, Thomas Tibbins.

CHAPTER IV

What beast, if capable, would act like man,
Proud man, with reason blessed!

"The Disconsolate Monarch."

AFTER Simkins had gone, and while the passion was yet warm within her, his wife called her three servants and proceeded, single file, herself leading, direct to the library with the view of finding among her husband's books and papers the proofs of his infidelity.

In her jealousy she would have none but male servants, of whom she employed three, in various capacities in and about the premises. Perfect ignoramuses were they, with about the bulk of one man's brains distributed among them. Standing in mortal fear of Mrs. Simkins, they were ever on the watch for her whereabouts. She only tolerated them because of her inability to secure better servants and having them remain under the treatment she accorded them.

To the many suggestions of her husband that her own labors would be lessened by employing female help in the household duties, she would say, "women are not equal to the doing of it," and then glancing at Simkins, would note what effect, if any, her remark might have on him.

Fipps, one of the help in question, acted in the capacity of head, or first servant, and such treatment

as he received he accorded them, the servants under him.

But let us return to Mrs. Simkins and her doings in the library. Never was woman more interested in the work before her. Down comes a package of neatly filed documents which until examined she firmly believes to be the very proofs she is searching for, and now another, and another—and still another file is tumbled down and searched through without success. Surely there must be some secret drawer in which he conceals them, and acting on this belief, she sounds the cabinet front and rear.

For one of her years, may it not be truly said, she should have had better sense. The fact is she had reached an age at which in some persons conviction is impossible.

Some long time was passed in silence and the deep study of the multifarious documents which were still being handed down from the upper shelves, and now lay in a confused heap before her, many of which had grown yellow with age. In many the characters were almost obliterated and defied deciphering. These Mrs. Simkins consigned instantly to the flames.

“For my part,” said Mrs. Simkins, poring over a volume which she had just taken from one of the shelves, “For my part, I never could see what benefit is to be got out of books.”

“Nor I, either,” ventured Fipps, who thought he ought at least to say something, anything to agree with his mistress.

"Whatever may be said in their favor," continued she, "by the many fools who love and read them."

"Fools they certainly be," again spoke up Fipps, somewhat encouraged by his previous effort.

"They benefit none but the evil one, whose agents I verily believe them to be. I have known persons of both sexes, old and young, to be so taken up with them that they have wasted hours in reading them. I would I had the power," continued she, with a sigh, "I would prohibit the publishing of all books of whatsoever kind or character, nor would I except the newspapers, which I look upon as the conveyances of wicked ideas, and consequently the origin of half the trouble with which the world is afflicted. I would restore things to their primitive condition during which papers were an evil not dreamed of."

Concluding, she looked at her servants as though she would have them express their approval of her sentiments.

Fipps, more forward and intelligent than the other servants, not only nodded his assurance of the correctness of all she had spoken, but sought to strengthen his approval specifically by adding, in other words, that he himself was strongly in favor of a primitive condition of things, or any other condition, he cared not a farthing what, if only his mistress desired that it should be so.

Mrs. Simkins now turned her eyes inquiringly on the other servants, each of whom looked at the other

in blank wonderment, and not knowing what to say they smiled lugubriously and said nothing.

Taking another book from one of the shelves and without opening it, she exclaimed, "Cook book, indeed!" "What should my husband with a cook book? It may prejudice him against my own cookery, which, though not so complete, perhaps, as that which appears herein, is yet good enough for him and for me. Therefore let it be cast in the fire, not for any feeling I hold against it as a book, but for the baneful influence it might work in my husband." The volume having been handed to Fipps, he took it upon himself to open and look in it, saying, "It is a cook book, ma'am, for sure," for I read here "How to roast a goose."

"Never mind," quickly spoke up Mrs. Simkins, let the book be placed in the fire as I told you. There are more geese in this world than wear feathers, or are mentioned in cook books, I can tell you, and I could name one not the least of them, were it proper in me to do so."

"You mean me, Ma'am, I'm sure, for only this morning you called me one."

"I paid you an unintentional compliment," replied Mrs. Simpkins, looking on him frowningly.

Another volume, "The Lives of the Queens of England, with Portraits," was handed down. "Queens, eh!" muttered Mrs. Simkins, as she gazed through her spectacles into the work; "I'll queen him," and the "Queens of England;" following the previous work,

were soon chasing one another in flames up the chimney.

Would she never cease in her work of destruction? Not she. Having now fully entered into the spirit of it, she would pursue it to the bitter end.

A large volume in red Morocco standing conspicuously on one of the lower shelves next met the argus eye of this destroyer, and she asked what book it was.

"It is a book called Shakespeare," replied Fipps. "And no well-meaning man would have to do with it," cried Mrs. Simkins, arising quickly, and snatching the volume, "for a greater rogue never lived. I know his full history well, and am no book reader, either. Therefore you see plain enough that knowledge comes not of reading, and my advice to you is to leave books alone, or what little goodness is in you will be lost to you forever, but this caution I believe is needless, for if I mistake not, none of you excepting Fipps, can read a single word; certainly not pronounce it properly even if you succeeded in doing so.

"If you please, ma'am," spoke up Fipps, encouraged by the compliment Mrs. Simkins had just paid him, "I believe I could write a book myself."

"I have no doubt you could write a book as well as many who waste their time at it, but for your own sake, and for the sake of those who might read it, avoid doing so, besides 'tis admitted of all men that they who write books have no brains for the doing of anything else. But as I was going to tell you, this

Shakespeare, as he called himself, but whose true name I have forgotten, was a very bad man, who, the better to work his rascalities, took to himself this odd name; therefore let the book be cast in the fire with the others, for it argues no good mind in my husband to have it here."

"If I may speak so much," ventured Fipps, "this man was a great genius and writer."

"The greater the genius, the greater the rascal," "therefore, as I said, let it be cast in the fire."

Fipps, as before, opened the volume, and commenced to read, which Mrs. Simkins observing, she said, "Well, what think you now of this great writer, as you are pleased to call him?"

"A blood-thirsty rogue, sure enough, ma'am, by his own words."

"Let me see the words you speak of." The lines having been pointed out, she read them aloud, as follows:

"Now could I drink hot blood,
And do such bitter business as the day
Would quake to look on."

Dropping the book with the exclamation, "Did I not tell you so?" she ordered Fipps to throw it in the fire at once, which was accordingly done. "And, now that I remember it, this same Shakespeare it was, who for jealousy, smothered in her own bed, with her own pillow, his own innocent wife, Desmerona to death."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Fipps.

"Horrible!" exclaimed the other servants.

Now having read this book many times, as no doubt he has, why might not the mind of my husband have become infected with its malignant poison? Why might not it already have received the germ of jealousy, which growing and spreading as jealousy alone can, end finally in a repetition of the terrible event which I have just narrated."

Fipps thought it very possible.

Mrs. Simkins shuddered at the thought, and seizing the poker commenced to stir up the blackened mass that it might more readily burn.

Turning to her servants, she said: "That you may avoid for yourselves one cause of trouble in the future, I will state to you now, that being your mistress, 'tis proper you should agree with me in all I say, no matter how absurd may seem my statements, nor how opposite your own opinions thereto. As servants you should have no opinion save that of your mistress, and let me tell you now, for the last time"—and she gesticulated with the poker which she still held—"let me tell you now for the last time, that if I say black is white, it must be white, be it never so black."

"It is white," said Fipps.

"Certainly it is white," cried both the other servants.

"What's white?" queried Mrs. Simkins.

"Everything," answered Fipps, to which the other servants quickly and repeatedly joined and shouted, "Everything! Everything!"

Mrs. Simkins smiled. "I find you willing to comply with all I say, which, as servants, as I said, it is proper you should. I hire you not for your opinions nor for your wisdom. If you have wisdom in you so much the better for yourselves, and my advice to you is that you use it to place yourselves in means; for you will find as you grow in years, that wealth more than wisdom will carry one successfully through this life."

"Will it please you, ma'am, to increase my means," asked Fipps, hesitatingly. "I had intended to ask you, ma'am, no end of times, but feared to do so."

"Was ever heard such impudence in a servant," cried Mrs. Simkins, looking indignantly at Fipps; "you now are more than paid. If you utter another word, another word, mind you, I'll cut you a shilling a month."

"Fipps hung his head and remained silent. The fire had burned low, excepting the charred remains which lay in the fireplace, there existed no evidence of the work of destruction that had there been consummated.

"Here's a book I would like to read myself," said Fipps, taking still another volume from one of the upper shelves; 'tis called, "The Art of Making Love."

"What's that?" exclaimed Mrs. Simkins, taking the book and running her eyes hastily over the title page. "Well as I live and hope for salvation, of all the books yet found in a library, and that library my husbands! Library, forsooth; a love correspondence agency I should call it. So, Mr. Lovemonger, I have

you at last where I can reach you, have I? I knew 'twas sure to come, no wickedness but finds its end. I had rather than all things else I came into possession of this book, and now believe books have a value which I never before gave them. So this is being buried in your tomes, as you call it, while your poor, silly creature of a wife, solitary and alone, is working her finger tips off in an effort to please you."

"What's the book all about, ma'am?" inquired Fipps, who was anxious to learn what was in the work that should cause his mistress to make such an ado over it.

"A something I hope you know nothing about, you never tasted the froth of making love, nor sipped the bitter and nauseating dregs of matrimony."

"Once, once only, I came very close to it, ma'am."

"The more goose you, who was the other?"

"A girl, ma'am, but she got away after all the trouble I had been to going to see her and the presents I gave her."

"Did you propose and she refuse you?"

"I told her I would marry her, and she said 'No.' Then I said give me my presents back, and she said 'No,' again, and told me I was a Hydrocephalass."

"What's that?"

"That's it. If I only knew what it meant I would then know what I am."

"Something complimentary, no doubt. Did you like her?"

"In some sort, ma'am; but she's any fellow's jilt

now for all me, and think of it, the presents cost me all the money I had, and all I could borrow of my bosom friend, Peter Boulder, as well."

"Then you lost the girl, time and money?"

"All, and my bosom friend, Peter, too, who since then puts his fist at my nose and tells me I must fight or pay him back, which, as you know, no truly honest and well-meaning man can afford to do."

"Worse and worse. So you lost the girl, time, money and also a friend, all for a girl?"

"All for nothing, ma'am; for I have nothing to show for my loss."

"Am I to understand that you consider a girl as nothing?"

"Oh, no, ma'am; a girl is everything until she gets you, and as good as nothing ever afterwards. I'll none of them, at least for the present."

"Come, now, I will ask you a plump question and see that you answer it plumply. You would marry her now, would you not, if she asked you?"

"Truly, ma'am; I have a kind of leaning toward marriage, and as girls go, I might do worse, perhaps, than to take her, though, indeed, I would she saw straight, then would I know where she was looking, and what she was looking at."

"Love turns all to favor and to prettiness."

"Love may, but a poor man, ma'am, must look out for himself, and as my friend that was, once told me, marriage is no pastime."

"Many, indeed, think so; but I must tell you this—

a girl and money may be replaced always—a friend but seldom, and time never; but, of course, you meet her sometimes and smile on each other still, is it not so? I have heard of such.”

“Oh, no, ma’am; she turns up her nose when she sees me, which I take very ill of her; indeed, so long as she holds my presents back.”

“Yes, that would seem to make some difference, but different persons express love differently, you know. For myself I would consider it an indication that her love for you is not such as should go with marriage. What think you?”

“Faith, ma’am, I don’t know what to think.”

“I will tell you. Think yourself well off, that you are single, and remember that he who is unable to care for himself is but poorly able to maintain and provide comforts for another, and that of all persons a wife. Have you any correct conception of the word ‘Wife?’ ”

“A girl you marry to take care of you.”

“Hand me the book and be seated, and see that you speak not till you be spoken to. I shall as soon fly as fill your vacuum.”

The conversation, by far the most extended that had yet passed between them, advanced Fipps considerably in the estimation of his fellows, and they looked upon him approvingly. He motioned them with head and hand to be seated, which they did hesitatingly, and only after he himself had set the example, distributing themselves about the apartment.

Mrs. Simkins, meanwhile, was deeply absorbed in the book, "The Art of Making Love," the leaves of which she was constantly turning, pausing at intervals to read such passages as seemed to her most interesting. Looking up and around the room she arose suddenly, and throwing the book on the table, exclaimed:

"Well, I never! How dare you sit in my presence, on my furniture, and in my library? Was ever seen such impertinence in servants? If I did my duty I would discharge each and all of you this minute. Soon you will claim possession of the entire premises, 'tis coming to that fast."

Fipps, the spokesman on this, as on all other occasions, informed her that she herself had ordered them to be seated.

"I never said so, nor is it possible that I could say so. Here, take the book and read from it aloud. I do not care to read the book myself, and yet would know something of its contents."

"It says here, ma'am," said Fipps, reading, "Let the wife treat her husband with as much respect and attention as she does another wife's husband."

"Humph! exclaimed Mrs. Simkins. "It says that does it, and who doesn't do so, I should like to know?"

"The wife's age should never exceed that of her husband," continued Fipps, still reading; "nor approximate it by at least two years. Indeed, it were

better the wife be twenty years his junior than that she exceed him in years, if only by one day."

"That will do," cried Mrs. Simkins, "read no more. The book is useless for the purpose for which it was written. I know something of the proprieties governing such matters, myself."

"Shall I burn it, ma'am?"

"By no means, 'tis the only evidence I have so far obtained, and it will be strange, indeed, but I shall make him wince under it and confess himself."

"What's this?" said Fipps. "Why, here on the fly leaf is a woman's name and other writing."

Mrs. Simkins reached for the book hastily and read the name, Polly Pillowpull, and beneath it the following lines and verses. The writing showed distinctly the hands of two persons, a lady's and a gentleman's, the latter the writer of the lines and verses, doubtless being a friend and admirer, to whom, not unlikely, the lady had presented the volume in a playful humor with her autograph:

When charming Polly walking goes,
It matters not, or street or lane
Enchanted, all would be her beaux
And following, gaze and gaze again.

And every bird that past her flies,
With praises sweet for bounties given,
Entranced, returning feasts his eyes
And trills aloud his voice to Heaven.

And when at night in balmy sleep
Upon her downy bed she lies,
In dreams, the angels do her greet
And bear her skyward to the skies.

‘Skyward to the skies,’ O that’s abominable, I might have said, ‘and singing bear her to the skies.’ Heigho, I will e’en follow the bent of my muse, and hie me to bed and to sleep at once, and O, ecstatic thought, dream of Polly.”

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Mrs. Simkins pored over the name and verses a long time in silence, apparently anxious to come to a definite opinion as to whether the characters, which she concluded were disguised—were those of her husband, and as if unwilling to rest the matter on her own judgment, she turned to Fipps as her only relief. Fipps very importantly assured her of his ability to absolutely decide the question—having often seen her husband’s handwriting—and a specimen having been obtained, they forthwith commenced to make comparisons and to discuss the matter in all its details, but, as is usual in most such cases, without coming to any mutual agreement; for each held divergent opinions, that of Fipps being in favor of her husband, and against his having had anything to do with the writing. Any feeling of uncertainty that Mrs. Simkins had at first entertained as to the correctness of her own opinion lay in the fact that her husband had no talent in the line of poetry, but that he had resorted to the now not uncommon practice of appropriating the ideas and lines of others, admitted of no doubt, and her opinion thus influenced and strengthened had been made up and fixed accordingly.

“I can make poetry,” spoke up Fipps, on hearing

his mistress mention her husband's inability to indite verse.

"Your genius is of so heavy and burdensome a kind it holds you down and prevents you from rising and being anything above what you now are, and may yet prove the instrument of your destruction," exclaimed Mrs. Simkins, frowning on Fipps, whom she now commenced to berate in a manner which she alone could, telling him the handwriting was so unmistakably that of her husband that none but the veriest noodle could, under any circumstances, bring himself to believe otherwise.

Mrs. Simkins sat resting in a chair close to one of the cabinets. Above her, upon a high stool stood Fipps, again engaged, or pretending to be engaged, in a further search of any paper or letters that might have been hidden behind the books. Said she, "I grow weary of this searching. I have a great mind to give it over."

"So you should, ma'am," added Fipps, who was himself very tired and anxious to get away.

"How do you know that?" cried Mrs. Simkins, very sharply.

"Didn't you say, ma'am, I was to agree with you in all you said?" In his nervousness he let fall a small volume entitled, "A Cure for Jealousy," which he happened to be holding. It struck Mrs. Simkins fair and square on the nose, knocking therefrom her

golden spectacles and causing her to fall backward in her chair in a half swoon.

Believing her dead, the terror-stricken Fipps jumped from the stool, and hastened toward the door. "Come," said he, "let us go, let us leave at once. There is not a judge in all England but will hang us."

Paying no heed to what Fipps had spoken, one of the servants ran and brought a basin of cold water, with which he bathed her forehead copiously. Mrs. Simkins revived, and looking daggers at Fipps that worthy incontinently fled the apartment.

CHAPTER V

What's fame but breath—a grave;
Perchance, a monument;—a monument,
A mockery, what more, to teach man
What he is, not what he was.

“ The Disconsolate Monarch.”

THOMAS TIBBINS, “poet” and friend of Simkins, was a little over six feet in height, of spare build and fifty. A bachelor, and opposed to matrimony, he had never failed to run his arguments against it, despite which, however, as he himself often said, he might have had his choice of several of the first ladies in the county.

A man of much vanity was he, with an unfaltering belief in his own poetical abilities. Bald-pated, he had allowed the fringe of hair,—which from ear to ear encircled the lower part of his head, to grow long and rest upon his shoulders in imitation of the earlier poets. A vest buttoned to the chin, and a wide collar overspreading his coat, added not a little to the singularity of his appearance, and made him, with his excessive height and attenuated form, the cynosure and jest of many beholders.

Indifferent as to exercise, he spent much time in reading and writing; that portion which was not thus employed was passed at the neighboring village inn, whither he sometimes repaired for ale and amusement. Unlike Simkins, he possessed means of his

own, the kindly remembrance of an uncle, some years deceased.

The house, a rusty reminder of what it had once been, was the property of a Mrs. Worthington, a sedate widow of fifty-five, and she and her adopted daughter, Fanny, now occupied it. With them Tibbins had for two years boarded.

With a bottle of the "best brew" on the table beside him, he was frequently to be found up at one o'clock in the morning as busily engaged at his "pleasure," as he termed it as though his life depended upon it.

The night-belated villagers often asked themselves, what on earth old Tibbins could be doing to keep him up till that late hour. Indeed, the light in his room had often served them on dark nights as a beacon from which to take their reckoning.

A few pebbles thrown at his window by some of his waggish, inn-keeping companions, would so frighten him that it never failed to send him and his inspirations to bed on the next instant.

He had frequently sent his "poems" to London—to the publishers there—but in a few instances only had he been favored with a reply, and more annoying, his MSS. had seldom been returned. "This is but a prosy world at best, and little given to the pleasures of poetry," he would often exclaim as he sought consolation in his belief that posterity, that sets all things right, would at last make famous the

name of Tibbins by placing it in the front rank of the poets.

Many and many a night had poor Mrs. Worthington and her daughter yielded to the whim of the "poet." Many and many a night in passing the "poet's" room while on the way to their chamber, had they been persuaded to enter and listen to a recital of his recently composed canto; so annoying indeed, had this matter become to them that they were finally compelled to steal their way upstairs to prevent Tibbins hearing them.

Betty, the maid of all work, was often beguiled into neglecting her duties on promises of shilling payments, promises seldom fulfilled; in fact, she became the poet's most frequent auditor, sitting, broom in hand, an attentive listener: he would prance up and down the room declaiming in a loud voice and gesticulating like a lunatic; while Betty, unable to restrain her laughter, applauded him to the echo. Many and many a time had Mrs. Worthington been compelled to call Betty to resume her duties downstairs.

"From poetry to pot hooks, from sublimity to degradation," the "poet" often exclaimed, as Betty would rush from the room in answer to her mistress's call.

Mrs. Worthington, in her time, had been a reigning belle of society. Highly accomplished, and possessed of extraordinary beauty, she had been much sought by the fashionable world of London; but some sorrow or circumstance had occasioned her withdrawal from

its fascinating allurements at an early age, and she had settled down in her present home to spend her remaining years in a quiet and unobtrusive manner. Much of her former gaiety would now and again manifest itself in spite of an apparent effort to prevent it, after which she would again subside into the staid and matronly lady she had become.

There was a certain something in her appearance, and demeanor, which seemed to say, Mrs. Worthington could tell an interesting story if she would. If she possessed a secret she kept it so closely locked in her bosom that I doubt if any one would even hope to wrest it from her.

A loud barking of the dog announced Simkins' arrival at Mrs. Worthington's house. Betty, ever on the alert for newcomers, ran and opened the door, ushered him upstairs and into the "poet's" apartments. Dropping his pen, Tibbins advanced to greet him.

"Tell me what has brought you so unexpectedly to visit me, and in such a plight?"

"Question me not," said Simkins, dropping into a chair, "but give me of that cheer and refreshments which, as you say, my condition would seem to stand me so much in need of."

"What has happened? For, indeed, if your condition and countenance be taken as indications, none but a woman could have had to do with you."

"I can shape my conversation to nothing but my

stomach, and to that which may relieve it. In brief, I am marvelously hungry."

Betty having spread the table, Simkins became at once engaged in testing the relative merits of the dishes it presented. Meanwhile Tibbins lit his pipe and resting his long legs on the back of a chair, leaned backward and watched the smoke as it ascended in whiffs to the ceiling.

His appetite appeased, Simkins arose, and declared in a manner which admitted of no doubt that he felt like a new man. He now entered into a detailed account of every circumstance which had lately transpired between himself and his wife, not forgetting his furious ride and sudden fall.

"Believe me, it is another proof of the unrighteousness of the marital tie or folly, as I might term it," said Tibbins, "and let me tell you, I think we commit great sin in not going among our fellowman to exhort him against every alliance with woman. How say you to it? I, too, exhort him, and hold up you as a living proof in support of my argument."

"So far as concerns yourself," replied Simkins, "you may do as your judgment shall direct. For my part, I have ever held that arguments are at best but windy matter, and I was ever a fool in them. So let me not show it, therefore, among people when I have no need to do so."

"It seems at once practicable and possessed of humanity," resumed Tibbins, now thoroughly warmed to the subject, "let us go together into the world,

for I would not restrict our travels to any particular place or country, and let us make known to man the danger with which he is surrounded, and of which he seems so ignorant. Let us exhort him to avoid that sex which has ever been the ruination of mortal man."

"Do you not know that they would leave no part of you together?"

"I admit the ferocity of the sex, yet would I risk every danger for the pleasure it would give me to thus vex and annoy them."

"I came here to solicit your advice as to how I might rid myself of one woman and you would have me go and face a number of them."

"By so doing you may revenge yourself for the many vexations caused you by your wife."

"I want no revenge, nor anything of them, so they give me peace, 'tis all I ask for."

Realizing the utter uselessness of further argument Tibbins remained silent; an idea soon seized him however, which was, that he would write a poem touching his views on matrimony and have it printed and distributed among the male residents in his immediate vicinity.

Having eased his mind on this point, he went to a pantry, out of which he brought a decanter and glasses, also several rolls of MSS., placing the decanter and glasses before Simkins, he proceeded to unroll the poems at once, and long rambling affairs they were, possessing neither rhyme nor rhythm,

filled with unmeaning words, uncouth comparisons and embracing every topic which had even been written upon.

"There are many styles, and many designating terms used in poetry," said Tibbins, continuing to untie and arrange the MSS. in proper form on the table, "which in the course of my recital I will give you examples of, including the sentimental, which I seldom indulge in, preferring to leave it to rhyming scribblers, and love-sick schoolgirls."

"Which style do you prefer?"

"The style I have adopted is one best suited to the bent of my genius, for in it I am bound by no known rules of writing, but may ascend and descend, go crosswise or otherwise, as the vagaries of genius shall carry me."

"In what estimation is this style held?"

"Genius is an uncontrollable power and its results must be accepted, unquestioned, as sublime."

"But is it so accepted?"

"Professed judges, not understanding it, so accept it, while the many, having no opinions of their own, of course follow the judgment of those who profess to know. Understand me, this style of poetry can only be adopted to advantage by authors of established reputation. In a student it would be looked upon as lunacy and consign him to everlasting oblivion."

"Being unknown, what profit do you expect to derive from adopting this style of writing?"

"Do you suppose I would so debase genius as to

think of profit? What care I for profit? What cares genius for profit? Fame I seek—fame all authors seek, and few attain. But I shall attain it,” mused Tibbins, “when? While I live? No, When I am dead? Yes.”

Having, by this time, untied and arranged his manuscripts two deep on the table, he picked out the largest of them, and proceeded to lose much time in an effort to assume a becoming attitude for its delivery.

Being finally ready, he commenced to declaim in a loud voice, every now and again striking the table with his closed hand, as was his wont, to give force, and emphasis to the argument, and casting glances of approval at his friend, who in like manner responded.

Having finished, and without commenting on the merit of the work as Simkins had expected he would, he picked out another MSS. and again commenced to recite, as follows:

Even as the Sun with purple colored face
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn—

“Pardon me,” interrupted Simkins, “but do you know that sounds very like the beginning of a poem I have frequently read.”

“Poem you have frequently read,” repeated Tibbins with much assumed indignant surprise.

“Frequently, and it wasn't yours either.”

"Do you not know that the thoughts of great poets often run in the same channel."

"But not the lines, line for line, as you recited them, you will find the words the commencement of the well-known poem entitled 'Venus and Adonis' by Shakespeare."

Tibbins laughed long and loud, saying that "he had merely desired to put Simkins's knowledge and appreciation of poetry to the test, and after all, when it comes to the question of plagiarism, let me tell you that that fellow Shakespeare was himself not averse to appropriating a few of the literary trifles belonging to others, but be that as it may, I will now recite an entirely original creation, an emanation of my own brain and genius entitled "Marty and Matilda", a poem founded on love and equal in merit I know to that of "Venus and Adonis", composed by the divine William, as some love to term him."

"Heavens" muttered Simkins almost audibly, "what would I not give were I but back again in my own home."

During one long and weary half hour was poor Simkins compelled to sit there wondering what it all meant and wishing "Marty and Matilda" were both buried beyond the power of mortal man to resurrect them.

It now occurred to him that he had discovered a means whereby his wife might not only be cured of jealousy, but be entirely gotten rid of likewise. Oh! that he might only induce Tibbins to accompany him

home and read his poems to his wife, he would be the happiest man in the world.

"There" said Tibbins, laying the MSS. on the table, and helping himself to the brandy. "What think you of that as an expression of mutual love at first sight? Of the overflow of love if I may so express it? What think you of the fertility of the invention? Of the sublimity of the sentiment, and of the language? And to think of its being mine, mine, from first to finish," and he rubbed his hands in proof of the joy which a contemplation of his poem gave him.

"If my judgment be accepted," remarked Simkins, "this is the best of the poems you have read to-night."

"Ah," uttered Tibbins gleefully, "I knew you would say so."

"But for all that, its faults are so many, and of so inherent a character that, to remedy them, would be to re-write the poem in its entirety."

"What's that," exclaimed Tibbins aghast.

"Why did you build up the love of the lovers to such a height, only to drop them later into the deepest abyss of despair, and finally push Marty from a precipice; sending the lovable Matilda to a nunnery in sorrow for life."

"This is the most diabolical criticism of a noble poem that has ever come under my observation;" said Tibbins, pacing excitedly, "and is born, if not of the devil, of his first cousin, that green-eyed monster, jealousy," and standing over Simkins in a somewhat

menacing manner, he continued, "tell me, what would you have me do."

"Why didn't you marry them at the end, and send them on life's journey happy?"

"Marry Monkeys. Would you have me play the truant to my own convictions, to my well-known feelings against matrimony." And seating himself with his back to Simkins, he sought consolation in the brandy, which he reached for and continued to sip for some minutes in moody silence.

Simkins's eyes, now half closed from want of rest and use of the intoxicant, wandered in the direction of the mantelpiece, to the clock which was upon the stroke of midnight, and he wished himself at rest in his own comfortable bed at home. Disappointed, he already imagined himself trudging homeward on the morrow, minus the advice he expected to receive, and he resolved, friend or no friend, to place no trust in poets hereafter, and in poet Tibbins in particular, contending that as poets live in the sky they are prevented by the clouds surrounding them from seeing all the other persons and things except those that pertain to themselves alone.

Tapping Tibbins on the shoulder that personage suddenly and wrathfully arose and confronting Simkins demanded in no undecided tone, what he wanted.

"Now that I have listened to a recital of your poems replied Simpkins timidly, "let us take up the subject of my wife's jealousy, the subject for the discussion of which I came to visit you."

"Not now! Not now!" repeated Tibbins, petulantly,

as he looked over the MSS. on the table. "Never disturb a man in the heat and flush of his desires," and selecting still another MS. he added, "now here is a trifle which is yet in embryo but which I hope to complete to my entire satisfaction at the next sitting, you will observe in it, not greatness, but the germ of greatness that is to be. I have called it "Dan Cupid (as seen through the spectacles of Thomas Tibbins, Poet.)" and will take occasion to tell you if your criticism of the poem is not less embittered with the gall of your envy, I shall be constrained to beg you to relieve me of the honor of another visit. Let honesty prevail in all things, say I."

Simkins's condition was now such that if he heard the words, they conveyed to him no significance whatsoever, and the poet awaiting no reply, commenced to recite the following lines at once.

Cupid a demon is
And in angel form appears,
With face as innocent,
As e'er to pretty babe is sent.
And the wings wherewith he flies
But serve to hoodwink mortal eyes.
Quick of eye and hand is he,
While a hunting he doth be.
Mark him now! his mind is made
—On some luckless victim laid—
Forth from out his quiver, he
Doth draw a shaft, and as quickly
As even upon the instant, takes his aim
And rends his victim's heart atwain.
And now with all his might and main,
With joy that he did wound his game,
He into laughter breaks—
Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!
Ah cruel foe—
What misery he makes.

"This poem, as I mentioned is not entirely to my liking," said Tibbins, stopping short in his recital, "but I will soon make it so. 'Tis but a matter of the hand, not of the head which has already digested it, but let me on with the reading," and looking towards his friend, he observed for the first time that gentleman's position and the oblivious interest he was manifesting in his recital.

Simkins's eyes had closed, his arms hung limp by his side, his head inclined backward, his mouth was wide open.

Dropping his manuscript he stood as though transfixed. He could scarcely believe his friend would offer him so great an indignity. Simkins was not only asleep, but, O, Horror, he had even now commenced to snore, to snore, as it were, his disapproval of the Tibbins poems.

He stood looking at him a few moments in silence. Said he: "I have been to him, that precious and most rare of man's possessions, a friend. And to be treated thus. Gratitude has fled, hereafter, to be known but as an unmeaning word. Had he kicked me I would have said nothing. Had he drawn my blood it still might be a matter of forgiveness, but to snore in the face of my recital is an insult my dignity can never brook. Hang him and his impudence. I will be revenged. I will empty this pitcher of water in his face if I die for it."

At this moment Simkins commenced to mutter in his sleep, and Tibbins, in his eagerness to learn what

he was dreaming of, forgot all about his revenge. He placed his ear close to his friend's mouth, a jumble of inarticulate sounds, and a smell of brandy, were all that issued from his throat. Success at last crowned his efforts. Simkins was engaged in an altercation with some woman, and that woman, past doubt, his wife. At this juncture Mrs. Worthington's terrier, that had entered the room with Betty when she brought up Simkins's supper, commenced to growl. "Hush," said Tibbins, in a low tone.

"Yes" said Simkins, still dreaming, "I must hush and you do all the talking."

Unable to restrain himself, Tibbins burst into a fit of suppressed laughter.

"I have known Tibbins a long time," continued Simkins, still dreaming.

"As I live they are talking of me."

"He may not have the wisdom of Solomon," continued Simkins, "but you are not fully justified in calling him a fool."

"I'll be hanged if she is," cried Tibbins aloud. Something unusual must now have happened the dreamer, for he commenced to shout "murder" as loud as he could, and waking swung his short legs suddenly around tripping the poet, who fell his length upon the floor.

Simkins was not conscious of having dreamed. He saw his friend lying upon the floor, recollected hearing the cry of murder. A solution of the matter flashed through his mind at once. While he slept,

Tibbins had slept also. Thieves had entered and attacked his friend. They had knocked him down. Perhaps they were still in the house. Perhaps in the adjoining room, and with the fear which this sort of thinking inspired in him, he shouted "thieves" at the top of his voice. Getting up as quickly as he could, Tibbins rushed into the adjoining room to secure his pistol. In his haste he accidentally discharged a barrel of the weapon.

Simkins, meanwhile, had crawled under the table, and endeavored to hide himself as he best could. Hearing the report, he was sure Tibbins had found the thieves or the thieves Tibbins, he knew not which. To add to the occasion the little terrier was tugging vigorously in an effort to pull his coat-tail off, or him from his hiding place.

"Tell me," said he, poking his head from under the table, "if they have gone."

"Gone! Who's gone?"

"The thieves; the thieves," repeated Simkins.

"What thieves? I saw no thieves."

"No thieves," said Simkins, taking courage, and striking his head against the table as he issued from under it. "No thieves, why, who assaulted you?"

Unable to restrain himself longer, Tibbins burst out with the exclamation, "You're the biggest, littlest coward I ever heard of."

"A coward living is better than a brave man dead," quickly responded Simkins, "and I am not lack-

ing in courage either. In a good cause I could face the devil, but the saints preserve me from all thieves."

"And women," added Tibbins.

The clock struck one. The MSS. having been rolled up and laid carefully away they retired for the night, or morning.

CHAPTER VI

Your sin is great,
And every one doth know, great sin doth call
For punishment as great as is the sin.

"The Disconsolate Monarch."

ON the following morning, Simkins, conscience stricken, arose with the sun, and after partaking lightly of tea and toast, which Tibbins himself had prepared, was ready to start on his return to the peace and quietness of his own home. The boy who had driven him the day before, had engaged to convey him the greater part of the way back, and was now waiting with horse and wagon at the gate.

He had passed a very restless night, each time he closed his eyes visions of wife, of "Bella", and of home flitted like a nightmare across his mind, while Tibbins, whose bed he shared, had frequently disturbed him by muttering in his sleep the lucubrations of his own poetry-ridden brain. He was going home, a disappointed, and much disheartened, if not a wiser man. He had confided in Tibbins to no purpose, he felt as though he could sink into his own boots, he almost wished the ground might open and receive him.

His wife had always exacted a reason for his absence, and he had no reason to doubt but that she would do so now. How should he appear before her.

How pacify her for taking her much-loved mare, Tibbins had promised to come and spend a week with him, some consolation, but would he keep his promise? Would he be content to spend a whole week in the company of a woman, against whom he entertained so great an antipathy? Would his wife permit him to remain if he should come? On both points Simkins had his doubts.

Thus musing, he pursued his journey homeward; having reached the top of a high hill it brought to view a large expanse of country, he stood and looked out upon it. He had often passed over it. Till then it had occasioned in him no thought. Each turn of his eyes brought with it some new addition of beauty. At his feet lay the village with its cluster of pretty cottages and its still prettier children, grouped in innocent pastime before the school-house door, he watched their movements, their shouts of merriment ascended, and rang in his ears. The very birds as they flew past him issued some note of gladness, of joy, which seemed to say, Simkins be happy too.

The church too was there with its tall spire, a silent monitor, standing in their midst. He could see the meadows which stretched away before him as far as his eyes could reach, he could see the cattle grazing placidly upon their broad bosoms; and in the dim distance he could see his home, he could gaze no longer. He passed slowly down the hill, through the village, and along the road to the little stone bridge. Here he paused, his home was now plainly in view,

and in the turret he imagined he saw his wife standing, evidently watching for him. With a heavy heart, he walked up the broad avenue to the house. As he approached the door, it opened, his wife stood behind it. He passed in and smiled blandly at her, even such a smile as a schoolboy wears when he has done wrong, and fearing he is to be punished, yet hopes to avert it.

Mrs. Simkins would accept of no smiles, she was not to be hoodwinked with smiles. She plied him a score of questions, yet gave him no time to reply to any of them. "Where had he been? What done? In whose company had he spent his time?"

Simkins looking very penitent, confessed to having done her a wrong, in absenting himself without permission, and begged forgiveness, all would not do. She likened him to those persons who are evermore committing some offense, and being detected, in an effort to avoid punishment, are always very penitent and begging forgiveness.

A strong believer in allopathy, she thought the dose should even more than meet the requirements of the case, and that a patient, acting the name, should take his medicine uncomplainingly and like a man.

This she hoped her husband would do but, whether or not, she would not now deviate from the course she had intended to pursue, pronouncing him incorrigible, she said as temptation could not be removed from him, he should be removed from tempta-

tion. She proposed by methods of her own to terminate this sort of thing at once, and for all time.

This was not all, but only the gist of Mrs. Simkins's remarks, which poor Simkins complaisantly received as he pondered the terrible ordeal his wife evidently had in store for him.

The house as I have mentioned, being of great length and very spacious, largely exceeded the requirements of Mrs. Simkins, who, therefore, had furnished and given attention to those few rooms only which she needed for her own and her "Hubby's" occupancy, all others had remained unfurnished, uncared for and in condition identically as purchased. It was toward the westerly or unoccupied wing that Mrs. Simkins now directed her steps and those of her husband.

"So Sir," said Mrs. Simkins continuing her interrogations, "'when charming Polly walking goes' you'll still persist in walking with her will you."

"My dear I never walked with her."

"You never will again, if I can prevent it and I think I can find or make a way to do that."

"I never heard of the lady, my dear."

"Oh, perfidious man! where were you if not in her company last night, I should like to know."

"I can explain that, my dear."

"Don't explain anything and don't 'my dear' me, Polly is your dear, or one of your many dears, as I should say."

"What Polly is she you speak of?"

"Oh, you have a number of the name, have you? What Polly, oh you dissembler, what Polly, but Polly Pillowpull, she who sees angels and is carried off nightly by them in her dreams. Does that recall her to you, does it?"

"What can I say but that I have no acquaintance with her."

"Dare you tell me you have no acquaintance with her when I have your own writing for it in my possession."

"My writing?"

"Your writing Sir, and I will make it an issue between us, an issue do you hear, a separation, and then, may your Polly's have and keep and provide for you as I have done and would still do but for your faithlessness."

"You wouldn't do anything to separate us, would you, dear, after our two years of unalloyed bliss?"

"Two years of unalloyed bosh, a separation you have long desired and schemed for, that I know for a certainty, but I will never give you the satisfaction of your desire, I will hold on to you by day and night and see that no Polly gets you while I'm alive. There's law in England yet, even if at times it is construed strangely, and I may yet invoke its aid against your creatures, the destroyers of my peace and happiness. Can you look me in the face and tell me you know nothing of 'The Art of Making Love?' "

"My dear, how strangely you speak. I would not presume to question your superiority in an art of which

you are and have been a past-Master, to my knowledge, since first I had the happiness to meet you. Ah, well do I remember, my dear, the art with which you wooed, won and made me yours, and all with a vehemency of love never excelled in the annals of the Art."

"Silence, you speak too glibly and of that which no ear cares to hear. 'Tis true I loved you once, and well you know where I bestow my love, I love, it should be so, but love bestowed upon a man that's cold is labor lost, returning lead for gold."

"Permit me my dear, to accord you that meed of praise which is at all times due a loving wife from her husband and say you have said well. He is indeed cold whom love will not warm and past Doctor Cupid's cure. I may say he's already dead and nothing lacks but only burial."

"These words from other lips might something mean, from yours, nothing—a tainted love and husband praise from such, Oh Heaven."

"What can I say that yet I have not said to prove my love most warm, cold, surely, I am not."

"Cold you are not to those you should be cold, to me an icicle, or as the North whose keen and nipping breath the tender shoots cut down of liking and of love, but this is from my purpose and has nothing whatever to do with the matter I have in hand. I spoke of a book and its title is 'The Art of Making Love.'"

"I never heard of such a book and know nothing of its contents."

"Tell that to Mrs. Simple, I have the lines at my tongue's end, all of them and these two may serve to freshen your memory:

And when at night in balmy sleep
Upon her downy bed she lies '

You never wrote those lines either, did you "My dear."

"I never could compose poetry, my Love."

"I said, wrote, moreover, I don't know if it is poetry or what it is, but call it poetry if you want to."

"I never heard the lines before."

"Of course you never did and the more goose I for asking, but I can tell you Mr. Simkins, downy bed or no downy bed, if charming Polly lies as easy as some men do she lies easy enough, I'll warrant. Come, follow me. Husbands who misbehave must punished be."

"My dear, love makes me as wax in your hands, mould me as you will."

The way, a devious one, led them up wide and creaky staircases, that oft had kissed the dainty feet of love-rapturous ladies as trippingly they ascended listening the sweet nothings of their would be lords and masters, but alas! all had long since passed away. The mirth, the music, the captivating laughter of belles and beaux, of bewigged and powdered dames and gentlemen, all, all gone, and in their stead a solitude profound, the greater for the remembrance.

Musty passages and dark and spacious corridors were traversed whose emptiness reverberated their

every foot-step and sent a chill through the now more than susceptible nature of her easy and acquiescent victim. Although not the walking hour, he already fancied he saw the long closed doors open stealthily and the ghost of the old Marquis and those of his descendants, costumed as in life, peering angrily at them as they passed.

Coming to the only furnished room in that wing of the chateau, a room long unoccupied, she unlocked the door, Simkins entered, she again closed and locked the door and putting the key in her pocket made her way downstairs.

Simkins was now a close prisoner in the haunted chamber. Yes, his wife had turned her home into a prison and taken upon herself the duties of warden.

"A pretty state of affairs," thought he as he threw himself upon a sofa. "Had she selected any other room, I would not care, but to remain here over night is to have them carry me out a corpse in the morning."

Like many persons who pride themselves, and make a boast of those qualities, which they least possess, so was it with Simkins of his courage, yet in this instance he frankly admitted that when it became a question of ghosts—or thieves, his courage never failed to leave him. He recollected the secret panel, to pass through which would be to follow a dark and narrow passage, and finally emerge from it, if at all, far out upon the grounds. He tried the panel,—without effort it slid back and forth. Simkins resolved to enter and follow its devious course to the end, then he wondered what

his chance might be of meeting with some obstacle therein, of his being unable to proceed, or to retrace his steps. "No! No!" thought he, "if I must encounter a spirit let me at least have space to run from it though it be no farther than from wall to wall of this room." Sliding the panel back, he went to the window and opened it. Looking down he saw a ladder resting against the house which seemed to invite his escape, and to his great delight, in the distance Fipps leading "Bella," apparently none the worse for her little gallop of the day before.

As he stood there his wife entered, and conducted him downstairs to supper. The supper was soon over, but the lecture which commenced with it was continuous and ended only with their going to bed.

Rejoicing because he was not compelled to sleep in the haunted chamber, being used to lectures, he cared little on this occasion for what Mrs. Simkins had to say.

In the morning after breakfast he was again placed under lock and key, brought down to dinner and again returned to the room till supper time. This sort of thing had continued two days, and Simkins's spirit, such as it was, was again aroused to a sense of action. He felt as if he would do something, something in spite of himself, but what he knew not.

Again making her appearance this time advancing well into the room she incautiously left the key in the lock. Perceiving it, he ran out and locked the door.

Mrs. Simkins, not Mr. Simkins, was now a prisoner.

He listened, presently the knob began to turn. She commanded him in her haughtiest tone to unlock the door, from commanding she tried persuading, and finally coaxing, but Simkins, whose spirit had not yet evaporated, was not to be beguiled by the sweet words of his better half, and leaving her there went downstairs to supper.

This extraordinary exemplification of his courage, calling, as it did, for more than the usual degree of self gratulation, we now find him strutting like a turkey cock with the importance of his achievement, up and down the dining room, his face all smiles, and his hands thrust deep in his breeches pockets. His exhilaration, however, was but a momentary one, a flicker and then a passing away. Indeed, fear of the consequences of his act had already taken its place, and he concluded to release his wife, at once.

Going upstairs and to the wing in which the room was situated, he heard her calling at the top of her voice to Fipps, but had Fipps been in his last sleep, he would have stood as good a chance of Mrs. Simkins's voice reaching him, and again undergoing a change of mind, the result of fear, he decided to leave her there till morning.

He remembered the brandy his friend Tibbins had treated him to; remembered how courageous it made him feel, how resolute. Recalled that under its influence, he would have challenged to combat even Satan himself, in proof of which he referred himself to his adverse criticism of Tibbins' poem, a risk he would not

have assumed in ordinary conditions. He remembered where his wife kept a bottle, to be ready, as she said, in case of cramps; he had cramps, at all events his supper had disagreed with him, and only brandy could ease him. Going to the pantry he brought out the much coveted bottle, tasted it, tasted it again, and again, thought it improved with each sip he took of it, resting his short legs on the table, he commenced to hum, humming gave way to singing, singing to boisterous shouting. Simkins was happy. Simkins could whip any woman in the shire. Striking at his coat, as it hung on the wall before him, he missed it, and saving his knuckles, fell sprawling upon the floor. Arising with difficulty, and taking the bottle with him, he succeeded in making his way upstairs to the door of the room in which his wife remained a prisoner, here he executed a series of whoops and war dances that would have made glad the heart of an Indian chief to witness.

Mrs. Simkins was bewildered. Had her husband gone mad or what ever could have happened to him. She asked him, if he was crazy.

Was he, would she come out and see, he would soon show her, he invited her to meet him at the exit from the secret passage, he would do her up in no time.

She begged him to go to bed.

He would go to bed when he liked. If he liked, he would stay there till morning.

The bottle was empty. In his antics, he had spilt the liquor upon the floor, he would find another bottle; assured her of his intention to return. In his efforts to get down he fell half the distance to the foot of the stairs where he lay, like a turtle on its back, unable to rise and was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER VII

Dreams are but dreams,
The offspring, as you know, of minds disturbed.
"The Disconsolate Monarch."

HAVING relinquished all hope of release, Mrs. Simkins had no alternative but to make of necessity a virtue by preparing for her sojourn for the night and this she commenced to do at once. Of course she fully expected to be relieved of her imprisonment on the following morning.

The room though long unoccupied, still contained the furniture and other belongings of some remote owner, evidently a person of wealth and refinement, who for reasons now unknown had departed, leaving everything in place identically as in use, while succeeding occupants, and there were many, whether from superstitious fear or other cause had scrupulously avoided the chamber and preserved its contents intact. Oblong in shape, and sombre not to say dismal in aspect was the chamber. Very large, very high and wainscoted in dark oak, half way to the ceiling, the ceiling itself being fashioned in large and small squares of the same material and wrought in a manner highly creditable to the wood carver's art. Heavy draperies, dust covered, and faded with the lapse of years, depended from the windows which looked out upon two sides and let in just light enough to make the gloom within seem more oppressive. The floor of

hard and fancy wood was laid in patterns, doubtless once well waxed, but now covered, like everything else about, with dust. Several Oriental rugs, promiscuously placed, lay upon and partly concealed the floor from view.

In one corner mounted majestically stood a suit of old armor, the hand resting on the hilt of a sword of gigantic dimensions. This and a crescent composed of ancient swords of various lengths and patterns which hung above the spacious fireplace, comprised the only reminders of human passion within view. An elaborately carved bedstead, curtained, whose rich coverings were carefully spread, and the fireplace which was also prepared and ready for use would seem to suggest the belief that the owner had intended to again occupy the apartment, and that his departure had been sudden. Of the correctness of this conjecture we shall never learn, but may indeed express our surprise that he should have abandoned the pictorial embodiments of his ancestors those full length portraits in oil, in various attitudes and grimy with age, that looked down from the walls, and seemed to follow, as with living eyes, the movements of those within the room.

Such was the haunted chamber, so called, and as such it was dreaded and avoided by all excepting Mrs. Simkins herself, who not superstitiously inclined had as soon occupy this as any other room in the chateau, but she did object to being deprived of her liberty by being locked in a room, haunted or otherwise and of

all persons, by that manikin husband of hers. The epithet manikin, the strongest in her vocabulary, she often opprobriously applied, when out of temper, to her husband.

While Mrs. Simkins was preparing herself for the night her eyes rested on the portraits. This time they attracted her as never before, partially undressed and with no other light than was shed by the candle which she carried, she passed from portrait to portrait evincing a more or less indifferent interest in each. There now remained but one other portrait for her to view; it hung directly opposite the bed on which, unwillingly, she was to seek repose. It was that of a lady of thirty, of sweet and amiable cast of countenance, sitting and costumed in the manner of the French nobility of the Sixteenth Century, a smile played about the lips, and in the right hand, which rested upon a drapery covered table, the artist had pencilled a bouquet of flowers. This doubtless had by some been considered the most interesting feature of the work, but not so thought Mrs. Simkins for whom the portrait bore a strange attraction, a fascination that kept her eyes riveted and herself standing on a chair, holding the candle before the face many minutes at a time.

The room was chill, and the fireplace as I have said had long been prepared and only required the application of a match to set it ablaze. She lighted the fire at once, and taking one last lingering look at the portrait, drew aside the curtain, extinguished the candle and retired to rest.

She tried to compose herself to sleep; the face of the lady in the portrait with its disturbing influence stood ever before her despite her efforts to prevent it, and it was not till after the lapse of several hours that she passed into a worrisome and wakeful slumber. An owl had winged his way and rested on one of the limbs of the huge oaks just outside her chamber window. Its dismal screeches disturbed Mrs. Simkins and caused her to murmur as she tossed, more and more uneasily in her restlessness.

The night too had grown unruly, fitful and boisterous winds had risen that seemed to vent their fury around the wing of the chateau where she lay. The weather warped windows rattled like one's teeth with the ague, while moans as of those in dire distress, that seemed to have their origin in the chimney issued from the fireplace, and resounded from every corner in the chamber.

There yet remained of the now smouldering fire a few expiring embers, which from time to time lit up and sent a faint glimmer of light around the room. Mrs. Simkins dreamed she looked indifferently into the gloom of her chamber. She looked again and again with ever increasing interest, and finally sat bolt upright in bed.

Not a believer in ghosts was Mrs. Simkins, but could she question her own eyes? Standing before the fireplace, and looking down into it, was the form of a woman in a white cap and gown. As Mrs. Simkins started the apparition turned toward her dis-

closing a countenance at once ghostly and rueful. The face was unmistakably that of the lady in the portrait but, Oh so changed. Mrs. Simkins was in a tremor. To escape from the room was impossible for the door, as she well knew was locked on the outside, and whether or not, the spirit stood between her and it and barred all passage in that direction. "Speak, speak, in Heaven's name, speak" moaned Mrs. Simkins in a tremulous and scarcely audible tone.

As if taking courage from these words the spectre advanced well toward the bed, an act which sent the now thoroughly appalled woman, still dreaming, crouching to its farthest corner. Having assured her that it had neither the power nor the disposition to harm, the unwelcome visitor commenced to talk in deep and guttural tones.

It had a tale to unfold and a tongue to unfold it with, in fact, a veritable talking ghost, and thus it delivered itself.

"Two hundred years have past
Since first I wed, and lived a happy life
In this our home.
Even as my life was he, My Lord, to me,
And even as he to me, was I to him.
In him affection grew, and blossomed forth
Each day, its loveliest flower.
Ten years together thus in happy state,
Along life's eventful path we journeyed on,
And still had thus our happy state pursued

Till our last step was done,
Had not that bane, that cankering demon come
And taken possession of me,

Beware! Beware of jealousy!

Let it not enter twixt thy peace and thee—
Bending an ear of Charity,
My husband stood, one day within the garden,
His supplicant a woman. Them I saw
And in a jealous fury rushed upon them.
'Twas nothing. 'Twas enough.
The wedge of jealousy had entered in
And made a breach between my love and me
Forever.

With rancorous hate, thenceforth,
My bosom burned. His every innocent act
But gave the proof to that which went before.

Let me take pause,
And hide for very shame
My guilty face.—
Occasion, which to evil doers comes,
Came now to me.
With grief of my estrangement soon he lay,
Ill of a fever. O, horrible to speak!
The hand that should have nursed him
Was the hand which in my jealous frenzy
Poison poured: Freed his pure soul
And gave it flight to heaven."

"Heaven preserve me," ejaculated Mrs. Simkins in
subdued and affrighted tones.

"Fear not,
I have no power upon you
For evil or for good. 'Tis mine alone
The murderous deed to name,
And thine to profit by it."

"I will, I will."

"But list,
The messenger of morn, Sir Chanticleer
Does, with his clarion notes,
The dawn awake
And night, black and repellent
Even as my deed, his face to hide
Slinks stealthily away.
O torture terrible!
Now must I hence to regions sulphurous,
There with the damned to stay."

"Mercy, mercy."

"Mercy is hers, who mercy shall deserve—
But let me not digress. Remorse was mine
Perfidious! Murderous wretch!
Thenceforth my guilty soul could conjure up
No thought save this,
A mad house next received me,
There I spent what more remained of life
And dead, was doomed
Nightly, the confines of this room to walk
Wherein the deed was done.

Beware, beware of jealousy!"

Having delivered its adjuration, the ghost, without the courtesy of an "Adieu" or the expression of a desire to be "Remembered" vanished.

Mrs. Simkins awoke and found herself buried, head and foot, beneath the bed clothes.

Beads of perspiration covered her brow, she would have given years of her previous existence to get out of the room. With great caution she peeped out from under the covers; she could see nothing.

To her mind this was no idle meaningless dream, the outcome of circumstances in which she found herself, but a reality, a reality as palpable as the bed on which she then lay, and of this apprehension she was never able conscientiously to relieve herself.

The approach of dawn reassured her, and averting her eyes from the portrait of the lady of whom she dreamt, she left her bed and sat by the window to await the time when the door should be opened to release her from all further confinement in the haunted chamber.

CHAPTER VIII.

I have fed my vanity so far,
That it hath like a far-stretched bladder burst,
And overwhelmed me.

"The Disconsolate Monarch."

AFTER Simkins had departed for home, Tibbins commenced at once the writing of his poem, the poem, which was to accomplish so much for man's good by pointing out the dangers that lie in matrimonial alliances. The poem, which was to depict married life in so hideous a form that bachelordom would seem as Heaven in comparison with it.

"If this my poem," thought he, "should be the means of saving man from a wife's thralldom the name of Tibbins will be blest. It will descend not only as a poet, but as that of man's greatest benefactor to the end of time. It is a theme that calls for the highest flights of my genius, and it shall have them."

He sat down and endeavored to write, Genius had taken her highest flight and was still on the wing, he tried to recall her. She would not respond. "A giddy jade this genius," thought he, "as fickle as a woman, but she will come anon," he had heard that many great authors had got their ideas while walking the floor, why should not he do the same. Genius still remained a truant. Others had conceived their most sublime thoughts while lying in bed, and thus was born to this world Tibbins' masterpiece.

The approach of dawn found him still busy seeking a title, "A title," thought he, "is to a poem, what a head is to a man, and it should be a good one, I will call the poem, 'Every man his own master or the blessedness of Single Life. A poetic study for man by Thomas Tibbins, Poet,'" and placing the MSS. under the pillow he sought a few hours of much needed repose.

The lapse of a few days only found the "poem" in print, and him and a hired man busily engaged in distributing copies thereof among the poorer folk resident in the neighborhood. On the third night following the distribution, he sat in his room alone. A copy of his composition lay on the table before him, he was in ecstasies. "Was it not exquisite?"

"The women themselves, although it opposed them, could not but admire the genius which each line reflected." Thus musing, a rumble as of distant thunder was heard.

Tibbins heard it. He wondered what it all meant, he opened the window and listened. The noise continued. It knew no cessation, no pause. "Brawlers" thought he, "on their way home from the village," he closed the window, but the noise becoming louder he reopened it, and again listened. The name "Tibbins" was cried aloud by many voices.

"Could it be possible that genius was so soon to be recognized. Was he at last to receive his reward, the recognition, the plaudits of his fellowman, for the service he had done him? Yes, he was sure he was."

Mrs. Worthington, Fanny, and Betty followed by the little terrier now came running frightened into the room, Mrs. Worthington was certain a riot had broken out, and that the rioters were about to ransack the premises, what should she do?

Fanny and Betty, in one voice, begged the poet to tell them what they should do. Even the little terrier, as he barked and jumped around him, seemed to appreciate the situation, and say "Mr. Tibbins what shall we do?"

"Fear not, ladies," said he, assuming his most dignified position, "Fear not for yourselves, nor for your chattels, Tibbins they seek, Tibbins the poet, Tibbins the philanthropist. You shall presently witness the honors which they will bestow upon me. You shall hear me speak my acknowledgements. You shall learn for the first time how highly honored you have been by my presence among you."

Betty ran to the window, and in the pale light of the new moon could discern large bodies of people, mostly women, approaching. Indeed, many of them had already surrounded the house. They were hooting, and yelling, and making all sorts of hideous noises.

Many carried horns which they blew incessantly. Some had tin pans which they beat upon with sticks, hand bells and gongs added their quota to the din, which was now almost deafening.

Tibbins approached the window, opening it, he stepped out upon the balcony, he stood before them

bowing his thanks, said he "This demonstration overwhelms me," but his voice was swallowed up in the whirlwind of deafening shouts, and no one heard it.

"Tibbins, Tibbins, we want Tibbins," cried a number of voices simultaneously.

"I am he, I, only I, am Tibbins."

A shower of missiles of every description greeted his announcement and discovering for the first time the relations between them he lost no time in getting back into the room.

Another volley followed his exit from the balcony which breaking several windows, drove Mrs. Worthington, Fanny, and Betty upstairs for safety.

"This is plainly an attempt upon my life, and to remain here longer would be to have all avenues of escape cut off."

Going to his pantry he seized several rolls of MSS., with which he hastily made his way downstairs, and opened the rear entrance, but oh horror!, there, as in front, a large crowd of angry men and women met his gaze and caused him suddenly to withdraw and close and bolt the door.

What should he do? What could he do? If he remained, the chances of the house being burned over his head were almost certain. If he rushed suddenly forth he might escape with only a few blows and even be able to inflict a few blows in return.

He was not long in deciding. Opening the door suddenly he was at once among them, but to get out from among them, was an altogether different matter,

he found himself wedged in so tightly that progress was almost impossible.

He struggled violently, using his fists, as he best could in an effort to strike any man or woman within his reach.

His hat was knocked from his head, his collar, luckily had parted, and thus saved him from being strangled, his coat had been ripped up the back as far as the collar, and the front of his shirt—his bosom—was snatched by some irate female who would ever afterwards hold it as a trophy against him.

As yet owing to the compactness of the crowd, there had been received very slight bodily injury on either side. Tibbins could not command the full and free use of his arms, and his opponents luckily for him were arm-bound to the same extent, but the swaying backward and forward of the struggling mass of which he was the centre, was continuous, and an adjunct only to the ever increasing cries for his life, which met his ears and caused him to think his escape, if accomplished, would be little short of miraculous.

Wedging his way at last to the edge of the crowd, escape seemed fairly in view, when suddenly he received a well directed and stinging blow on the nose from the fist of a brawny female, which dazed him for the moment and caused the scarlet to start in no uncertain way and fall upon his now sadly disarranged apparel.

Shout after shout mingled with cries full of peril for the victim followed this bit of luck of the enemy,

but Tibbins all unheedful of it, and having recovered his vigor, struck out, if anything more determined and forcibly than ever and finally succeeded in getting out of their clutches, receiving as a parting memento, a stone, which struck him on the broad of his back and accelerated his movements without hurting him seriously, and soon placed him beyond their reach.

Whatever Tibbins' antipathy of woman may have been, it may be asserted without fear of contradiction that he was now, and likely ever would remain a woman hater of the pronounced type, in any case he already had resolved that write against womankind as he might he would do so for his own pleasure alone, and not for the disenthralment of his own sex, whose ingratitude had brought him to the condition in which he now found himself. The word "philanthropist," henceforward, would have no place in his vocabulary.

He congratulated himself upon his escape, and unmindful of the injury to his nasal organ, and of his woe begone appearance his next thought was of his MSS., and feeling the legs of his breeches he found them still there, where he had thrust them. Tibbins was happy, he now decided not to defer his promised visit to his friend Simkins but go at once. Tibbins thought every man should keep his promise.

With the escape of the poet, the turbulence around the house of his landlady soon ceased. True, small bodies of women set out in hope of again finding him, but as the moon had gone down, and he had taken to

the woods, they soon saw the folly of any further search. Others betook themselves at once to home.

Mrs. Worthington, Fanny and Betty, now issued from their retreat in the garret, and after examining the damage done to the windows, proceeded cautiously downstairs in search of their friend. The rear door being open assured them he was not in the house, but whether he had gone voluntarily or been dragged out was a solution they could not readily arrive at.

Betty was certain they had seen the last of the poet unless indeed his mangled form should be revealed to them lying about the grounds in the gray mist of early morn, and apprehending a renewal of the attack, all three barricaded themselves in one room for the night.

At sunrise, after locking up the house, they hired a conveyance to take them to the house of a friend, intending if possible, to remain there until time should have smoothed away the bellicose feeling at that time prevailing.

CHAPTER IX

Our ailments let run
Grow worse and worse. Do not the doctor shun.
"The Disconsolate Monarch."

EARLY on the following morning, Fipps, while pursuing his accustomed duties stumbled across Simkins, who still retained the recumbent position in which we last left him, and assisted him to rise. He complained of feeling queer in the head, and going into the sitting room prepared to renew his slumbers upon the sofa, having first handed to Fipps the key of the haunted chamber, the door of which, he directed him to open.

Fipps did as he had been instructed, and putting his head cautiously into the room was surprised to see Mrs. Simkins sitting by the window. She made no mention of her unpleasant experience, but complained of feeling ill; inquired as to her husband's whereabouts, and voiced her disapproval of his rude behavior in turning the key against her, "his poor weak wife" as she expressed it.

Resolving never again to enter, or allow others to enter the room, she handed Fipps the key and instructed him to bury it and never divulge even to herself the place of its concealment. This duty Fipps faithfully performed and it may be stated on Mrs. Simkins' part that she willingly held to her determination, the haunted chamber thenceforth remaining a

sealed and inaccessible apartment. She spoke of his subsequent actions, and asked what instrument could possibly have occasioned the noise she heard in the corridor. Fipps who could not surmise what his mistress alluded to, replied the only thing he had seen was a large empty bottle which lay just outside the door of the chamber. She declared that under no circumstances would she ever again allow a drop of liquor to enter her premises. At her bidding, Fipps, assisted her to her own room where she ordered him to prepare, and bring her a cup of chocolate, and to ask that husband of hers if he had in his nature as much charity as would prompt him to go and fetch a doctor. The message delivered, Simkins said, "Certainly, he would go and bring a doctor, two, if she said so," the expense being her own, he cared not how many.

He started at once, and had proceeded about a mile on his way to the village, when to his surprise, he met Tibbins journeying toward Simkins' house. Having purchased of a farmer on his way thither a plain but comfortable coat, and having otherwise repaired his disarranged garments, his appearance now presented no indication of the struggle he had passed through the night before.

Simkins more than glad to see him, entered at once into a recital of his experience since his return home; his imprisonment and how he had finally turned the tables upon his wife by locking her in the haunted chamber. Tibbins had his own bitter experience to

relate, and then slapping Simkins on the back assured him he had at last entered upon a proper course of treatment toward his wife, and advised him not to deviate from it, he was certain Mrs. Simkins would ultimately be made sick.

Simkins informed him his wife was already sick and that he was even then on his way to get a doctor. Adding that he considered her condition due entirely to fright, the result of her confinement in the haunted chamber.

"'Tis no more, I assure you. I will be her doctor, let it be the means of my introduction into the house."

Simkins readily assented, and it was agreed between them that the poet should be known as Dr. Righter, and so called during his stay there.

As his wife had never seen Tibbins in person this deception was a matter not difficult of accomplishment.

Arriving at the house he was ushered into the sick lady's chamber at once and informed her he had hastened thither with his best speed to relieve her.

Mrs. Simkins smiled pensively "she was so glad," advancing to the bedside, he took her hand in his and his watch from his pocket at the same time. A brief silence ensued. He varied the monotony of the affair by gazing first at the watch, then at his patient, and afterwards at the ceiling.

Mrs. Simkins eyed him askance with evident interest.

He shook his head ominously, replaced the watch in

his pocket, and after examining her tongue, whose abnormal length he mentally commented on, laid his hand gently on her brow and inquired if her head felt hot, she replied, No.

Expressing much surprise, he asked if her feet felt cold?

"She had sometimes been troubled with cold feet."

"Creepy feeling up and down the spine?"

At this question the patient involuntarily assumed a movement indicating a desire to hastily leave her bed, which Tibbins preventing, he answered his own question by saying the disease had not as yet reached that stage in its progress, "and now Madam to fully complete my diagnosis it will be necessary to ask you one more question only 'Do you feel any lack of desire to rise?' "

Mrs. Simkins acknowledged that she felt an inclination for rest. Assuming to have learned something of vital importance in the latter information, he uttered a long, deep and significant "So, so" shook his head portentously, pressed his finger to his pursed lips, cast his eyes again to the ceiling, and seemed lost in utter abstraction. After the lapse of a few moments he walked slowly to the window, where he stood toying with his fob chain and looking vacantly on the landscape before him. Having heard of the eccentricities of many doctors eminent in their profession, she now began to entertain a very high opinion of Tibbins' ability. Returning, he placed a chair close beside the bed, and sitting, again took her hand and inquired as

to the condition of her stomach, and what she had lately eaten that might in some degree have added to the severity of her ailment. She replied, that so far as her stomach was concerned, she had never known, from any trouble it had ever occasioned her, that she had one, and after enumerating a few simple articles of diet of which she had recently partaken, asked if they were not of a kind calculated to do her good.

"It is not so much what one eats, as what one doesn't eat, that does one most good."

"I don't quite understand you doctor."

"I say nature gave to every man a good stomach, one that would last him as long as he had any use for it, if he would only allow it to remain so."

Mrs. Simkins' eyes were fixed intently on Tibbins, and in them one could read a confession of faith in her medical adviser, which by some is accounted one half the cure.

He now assured her with his soberest face that she would probably be unable to leave her bed for at least a week.

Mrs. Simkins closed her eyes.

"Your condition, madam, is a nervous one, and would seem to have been produced by much mental anxiety."

She looked despairingly at him, but remained silent.

"It is not necessarily a dangerous condition, but one that will reflect great credit on the practitioner who succeeds in preventing it from becoming so." "As doctor, it is my duty to make this known to you, that

you may avoid all cause of excitement, indeed, excitement at this time would prove highly detrimental to you. It might even remove you from all further participation in the affairs of this life."

Mrs. Simkins' feelings were expressed in motion, she moved uneasily in the bed.

"I had a case not a great while ago, a Mrs. Waddle of our village, perhaps you know the lady."

Mrs. Simkins said she had never heard of Mrs. Waddle before.

"A handsome woman, and very rich, but what are riches without health to enjoy them?"

"As nothing, nothing," groaned Mrs. Simkins.

"Well, she fell into a nervous condition, I was sent for, but unavailingly, she failed to respond to the treatment I gave her."

"Couldn't you cure her, doctor?" asked Mrs. Simkins anxiously.

"All was done that could be done, doctors Pillem and Killem were called in consultation, after which her case became at once more serious, I might say, entirely hopeless."

"She died then poor lady?"

"Oh no, she lives, but her mind is entirely gone, she is now in a lunatic asylum."

"What was her ailment, doctor?"

"Mental anxiety, nervous depression, brain affected, natural sequence, cause jealousy, jealous of her husband, led her husband a dreadful life."

Mrs. Simkins muttered to herself "jealousy, jealous of her husband."

"Mr. Waddle is very happy now though," chimed in Tibbins with evident satisfaction.

Mrs. Simkins eyed him sharply, "I can't see for the life of me how Mr. Waddle could be happy now, his poor wife being in a lunatic asylum."

"Why don't you see, madam. Mr. Waddle is now looking for another wife," and he chuckled and rubbed his hands in evidence of the joy it gave him to know how decided was the advantage which the fictitious Mr. Waddle had at last gained over his jealous better half.

"Oh! the rascal," ejaculated Mrs. Simkins fairly starting up in bed.

"My dear, dear, madam, let me again caution you not to allow yourself to become excited. Think of the interests at stake. Think of your poor husband. Think of him, madam, and of his being left alone in the world, with no one to care for him, or to watch after him."

"Did you say to watch him, doctor?"

"To watch after his interests, madam, for who can look after a husband's interests so well, half so well, as can a loving wife."

"A loving wife, doctor?"

"His wife, his own wife, madam."

Mrs. Simkins promised never to allow her feelings to overcome her judgment again.

"Referring to the Waddle case, now you couldn't

reasonably expect Mr. Waddle to live with a crazy woman."

"Why had he made her crazy? He had done so for obvious reasons. He had done so to get rid of her."

Tibbins again warned her not to get excited. Said he, "I know Mr. Waddle well, have known him a long time. Know him to be a gentleman."

"A gentleman would never think of marrying again while his poor wife lived, even though she was in a lunatic asylum."

"There is law for it."

"I have my doubts as to that, but no doubt as to Mr. Waddle not being a gentleman."

She had now waxed warm, in spite of the "doctor's" warning against it, and was in a frame of mind to enter into a discussion with all her well-known ardor, not to say fury, but Tibbins again warned her of the danger she was incurring and she subsided.

He intimated that the nature of her complaint made her sensitive, he would have said contradictory, but refrained for fear of offending her. Uttering a quiet and assenting "Perhaps so" she gave herself up to thought. Tibbins again took a seat by the window. A few minutes only had passed when she called to him saying she had something of importance to communicate. He was all attention and informed her that any communication entrusted to him would ever remain a secret. His anxiety to be informed made her distrustful, and she hesitated.

"Doctor," she said finally, "I have pondered this

matter, and in consideration of the present critical condition of my health, having the fate of the unfortunate Mrs. Waddle before my eyes, must make known to you that the relations between myself (Mrs. Simkins always gave herself precedence in speaking) and Mr. Simkins have not been of so pleasant a character as might be expected to exist between wife and husband."

"Indeed" said Tibbins, affecting great surprise and drawing his chair closer to the bedside, "and may I ask how long you have enjoyed the marriage state?"

"I have never enjoyed it at all."

"I mean, madam what length of time have you been married? How long is it since the knot was tied?"

"Two years, doctor."

"Why, the honeymoon should be scarcely over by this time, and pray, what is the nature of the trouble between you? Does he abuse you?"

"Most shamefully. You will scarcely believe it. He has given me great cause for jealousy."

"No."

"'Tis true, doctor."

"And may I be permitted to ask you to name an instance in which your husband has given you such cause? Jealousy you know often originates from no cause."

Mrs. Simkins thought a woman would be very foolish to be jealous without cause, and to this opinion Tibbins readily assented. Expressing a more than customary professional desire to cure her, he said he

would even neglect, or transfer to the care of his student, his other patients and sojourn in her house to keep watch over her symptoms. She was truly thankful and promised to pay him handsomely both for his time and services.

To a tumbler filled with water he added a little granulated sugar out of a vial which Simkins had provided him with, and placing it beside the bed directed her to take two teaspoonfuls every hour, and so left her.

CHAPTER X

How easy 't is to lie and wear the mask
Of sober honesty;
Let no man hence be trusted.

“The Disconsolate Monarch.”

LEAVING his fair patient to herself and her sugar and water, Tibbins started on his way downstairs. On the landing he met Simkins, his face radiant with smiles, and hopeful of anticipations. Tibbins laughingly told him that “in all his professional career he never before had had so healthy a patient, but have no fear,” added he, “for if medical science means anything rest assured, the old vixen shall not leave her chamber for at least a week.”

Simkins begged him to spare no effort to keep her there.

As they entered the dining room, Fipps came in with the announcement that three women who had just come up the avenue in a wagon were outside seeking to be admitted.

“Women,” said Simkins, thoroughly taken aback.

“Women,” repeated Tibbins, equally surprised.

“Women,” reiterated Fipps with emphasis as though he meant them to understand that he knew them to be women.

In obedience to instructions, Fipps went to ascertain their object in calling.

Simkins thought they had mistaken the house, or

called to inquire the location of some family residing in the neighborhood.

Fipps soon returned with the information that they had come on a visit to Mr. Simkins.

"To visit me," "me," "no," "it can't be." "If my wife should learn of it I would be forced to flee the premises. Tell them I am not at home, tell them anything but don't admit them."

Fipps returned, and almost immediately Mrs. Worthington, Fanny and Betty, not forgetting the little terrier, all came hurriedly into the room.

Tibbins, meanwhile had gone into an adjoining room, leaving his friend alone to receive them.

As they entered, Simkins could not conceal his surprise and chagrin.

Mrs. Worthington extended her hand, saying "We have such news to tell you Mr. Simkins."

"What's the matter," inquired he curtly.

"We have spent such a dreadful night."

"Very dreadful," added Fanny.

"Worse than dreadful," rejoined Betty.

"We have been mobbed, your friend Tibbins is missing."

"Perhaps murdered," added Fanny.

"We shall never hear him recite his poems any more," sighed Betty.

"Our house ere this may have been burned to the ground," said Mrs. Worthington, and continuing she narrated in detail, assisted by Fanny and Betty; the demonstration of the previous evening, also making

known that she had first visited her friend Mrs. Perkins—with whom she had expected to spend a few days—only to find her house, one of limited capacity, overflowing with company, and then alluding to the ample accommodations which Simkins' castle, as she called it, afforded, she began to divest herself of her shawl and bonnet, which Fanny, observing, did likewise. Simkins offering no reply wondered what the end would be.

The little terrier perfectly at home, was lying upon the sofa.

Betty, womanlike, was committing to memory all the household goods, ornaments, etc., contained in the room, not forgetting to note the age and condition of each and every article in it.

"In plain truth, not knowing where to go for safety, we came here Mr. Simkins," said Mrs. Worthington, seating herself with much composure in Mrs. Simkins' rocking chair, "knowing how kind—"

"My wife—"

"Dear, kind lady, of course when she learns of the dreadful affair how sad she will feel."

"I know she will," spoke up Fanny.

"Of course she will," chimed in Betty.

"Ladies, I sympathize with you, I realize how dreadful must have been the occasion that has driven you from so comfortable a home. It would give me pleasure to have you remain indefinitely but the fact is I have a wife——" here he paused and looked confused.

"Of course you have a wife," remarked Mrs. Worthington with some surprise, "I have heard her spoken of often, and it would give me much pleasure to make her acquaintance."

"You have come at a very inauspicious time," said Simkins, not deigning to notice the latter remark, "for to speak truth my wife is confined to her bed with illness, and will be unable to receive you."

They were all "so sorry" to learn that the lady was ill. Mrs. Worthington offered her services in Mrs. Simkins' behalf and rising was about to proceed to the kitchen at once to prepare a broth which she of all women knew best how to make.

"My wife," said Simkins, "is a woman of very peculiar temperament, and decidedly averse to the presence of ladies about the premises."

"How very singular," uttered Mrs. Worthington.

"How very singular," repeated Fanny.

"Oh! my, isn't she odd," rejoined Betty.

At this moment Tibbins made his appearance, observing him, Mrs. Worthington gave vent to her feelings in a loud cry, and involuntarily embraced him, Betty and Fanny did likewise, and for some minutes a shower of congratulations fell thick and fast upon him.

He assured them not only of his own safety but of the safety of his manuscripts as well.

Betty, with hopes of future promises of shilling payments, said she would so like to hear him recite his poems once more.

She was assured that her wish would be gratified, "but first," said Tibbins, "let us make some arrangement whereby you may all be allowed to remain."

He then explained to them the position in which Simkins and himself stood in regard to his own presence there, Mrs. Simkins would need the services of a nurse, in which capacity he thought Mrs. Worthington might act, but such was his patient's jealousy that she could only do so, however, by assuming to be his wife, and Fanny his daughter.

Mrs. Worthington unwillingly assented, Fanny was more than willing, and Betty would do anything, no matter what, to be allowed to remain.

Tibbins went upstairs to Mrs. Simkins' room at once and returning reported the matter as definitely and affirmatively settled. His patient more than pleased at the interest he was manifesting in her case had thanked him and requested that his wife be sent for with all convenient haste.

"Remember, madam," said Tibbins, "you are my wife, I am Dr. Righter. You are Mrs. Dr. Righter, and for the sake of harmony and the well being of our friend Mr. Simkins here, see that you carry out your part well."

"I have never been guilty of so great a deception in my life before," replied Mrs. Worthington, "but having entered into it, I will do my best not only for your friend's sake but for your sake as well," and she patted him on the cheek as she would say "You rogue, you

see I am not without some slight feeling of regard for you after all."

Sufficient time having elapsed to allow of Mrs. Worthington being sent for, she was ushered into the sick chamber and at once ingratiated herself in Mrs. Simkins's good opinion. Simkins and Tibbins meanwhile had gone to the Library where they sat conversing upon that all absorbing topic, Mrs. Simkins's jealousy. Fanny suffering the fatigue and annoyance of the previous evening reclined on the sofa. Betty having been told to prepare some mutton broth for the patient had gone to the kitchen in obedience to Mrs. Worthington's instructions.

Fipps, who had long held sway in that part of the household and looked upon it as an apartment belonging absolutely to himself, now considered Betty's presence there an intrusion, and made plain to tell her so.

Betty retorted that so long as she remained in the house, which she hoped would be a long time, she intended to be mistress of that department, words followed words in rapid succession, and ended by Betty striking Fipps on the head with a toasting fork which sent him shouting from the room. Unwilling to let him off thus easily she followed, striking at him as she did so, they had passed through the dining room, and out into the hall up the stairs of which Fipps bounded as though Satan himself were after him.

His shouts brought the entire household out to

learn the cause. The question of priority in the kitchen having been decided in Betty's favor she at once returned there, while Fipps was compelled to undergo a severe scolding from Mrs. Worthington into whose presence Mr. Simkins had caused him to be called.

CHAPTER XI

But we will take it as a strangeness in her,
A strangeness not unnatural to woman,
And so dismiss it.

“The Disconsolate Monarch.”

THREE days and nights had passed since Tibbins assumed the function of doctor, and as yet his patient had not left her room. True, in his absence she had frequently left her bed and sat by the window to while away the tedium of her confinement, only to return to it suddenly on the hearing of any noise suggestive of Tibbins's approach.

She felt better, better, indeed, than she had felt for some time and she longed for the hour that would enable her to resume her household duties.

Tibbins had told her he looked upon her sudden improvement as an unfavorable indication and this alone prevented her from resuming her domestic affairs at once.

Unable to restrain the poetic feeling which had again seized upon him, he would have given anything if Mrs. Simkins—much as he detested her—had consented to listen to a recital of at least a portion of his effusions.

“Madam,” said he, “did it ever occur to you that the muse in her goodness had bestowed upon me that greatest of all gifts, the gift of poetry?”

Mrs. Simkins eyed him keenly, but offered no reply.

"Yes Madam, such is the case and I trust I may be pardoned any little feeling of pride which the possession of so great a gift engenders within me."

"I have written much in my time, very much, among others a lengthy poem on the subject of 'jealousy,' perhaps you would like to hear me recite a few stanzas from memory?"

Mrs. Simkins excused herself on the score of weariness.

"Poetry acts as a wonderful charm in soothing any irritation of the nervous system, and as a cure for weariness its effects are simply marvelous."

Mrs. Simkins was still indisposed to listen.

"Of course, it is not given to all persons to appreciate poetry, more's the pity, and to recite to dull ears is like pouring water in a sieve. You have nothing for your pains, or pleasure, as I should say, for of course it is a pleasure, although only the poet himself derives it." At this moment, acting somewhat strangely, he requested Mrs. Simkins to remain perfectly quiet, placed his finger to his forehead, and himself in an attitude of deep thought, after a few moments reflection, he said:

Good books are friends, of this, if any doubt,
No doubt there is, that man is but a lout.

And taking a memorandum book from his pocket

he entered the lines therein, "and now may I ask who is your favorite author?"

"I have none," quickly responded Mrs. Simkins, "all authors are as one to me. I read none. Care for none! What care I for their ideas, my own notion of things is quite sufficient for me."

"But you certainly have preferences, have you not?"

"As to authors?"

"As to authors, madam, that is, if you read at all, you would much prefer, we will say, that greatest of all authors to all others?"

"And who is he?"

"Why of course, Shakespeare."

"I read Shakespeare, doctor? Not I indeed. I know him too well and his whole history. Do you think me so wasteful of time, not to say wicked, as to read such a villain? Why, I have lately destroyed a volume of him belonging to my husband."

"And may I ask what your husband says in regard to such wanton destruction of his valuable property?"

"Humph!" replied Mrs. Simkins, with a sneer, "I should like to hear him say anything. Is it for my husband to gainsay my acts?"

"But you will admit, that as your husband, he certainly has some rights?"

"Rights indeed; the right I suppose to lead me by the nose as I know many wives to be led by their husbands, being neither more nor less than slaves to them, cringing to them, subjected to them in every

conceivable manner, not daring to look or to speak save in such tones and with such eyes as shall best please, for fear of offending them."

"Certainly not, Madam, but surely you are not averse to seeing your husband happy?"

"Why of course not," replied Mrs. Simkins with a forced laugh, "of course not, and for that very reason I purchased this house and these grounds. Here he may find pleasure such as, I'm sure, would be appreciated by every reasonable being."

"But here you expect him to remain like a bird in a cage pining for liberty, and what does it help the poor imprisoned bird to know that its cage is a gilded one? Does it not pine all the same for freedom and the right to select its own food as nature intended it to do?"

"Doctor what myself or my husband have to do with birds pining in gilded cages is more than I know. I never kept a bird in a cage but once in my life. It was a present to my mother who in turn presented it to me. I was then quite young and became very much attached to it but it proved its ingratitude one day by flying away, and I resolved never to keep a bird in a cage again, and I never will."

"Now don't you think your own pleasure, and that of your husband, would be enhanced by the addition of a little company. A little society, Mrs. Simkins? Now only think how pleasant it would be to have your neighbors call once in a while, to have them dine with you and pass the evening in social intercourse.

I dare say you have quite a number of ladies residing in the neighborhood who would be only too glad to come and see you—and Mr. Simkins.”

“I dare say they would but they shan’t, if I can prevent them. Do you suppose I would place an obstacle in the way of my own happiness by having ladies—ladies I think you called them—spending evenings in my house, talking twaddle and misleading my husband?”

“Your husband has too much good sense to be so influenced, I am sure.”

“Are you, then you don’t know him half so well as I do. I would no more trust Mr. Simkins in the society of ladies than I would trust myself with Satan, and expect to escape unscathed, and leaving my husband out of the argument, do I not know what pretentious creatures these ladies are, with their frills, and their flounces, and their supercilious airs, as if they were duchesses, and possessed the wealth of the whole county in their own right? Do I not know too that the King’s English is not good enough for them but they must interlard their conversation with French and Latin phrases which they have specially memorized to meet such occasions, as they would say ‘there’s education for you.’”

“You are not versed in the languages then, Mrs. Simkins?”

“No, nor wish to be. Simple English is good enough for me. Of what use is all this display of fine words to any one?”

"Yet you had advantages for study in your youth above most persons, did you not? Your father, as I understand, was reputed a man of considerable means?"

"He was, but my mother dying while I was yet a child, left me the only guardian of a younger sister."

"Then the care of this younger sister deprived you of those educational advantages, which by reason of your youth, and the pecuniary ability of your father, rightly belonged to you?"

"Precisely."

"This was one of the few times that Mrs. Simkins was ever known to reply in monosyllable, and may be accepted as evidence of her desire to terminate Tibbins' interrogatories, of which she had become tired.

"But could not your father have hired some one to look after the interests of your sister during your hours of study?"

"The truth is my father was a man of very economical habits."

"Very short-sighted economy, I think. Ah! Do you know, there are scarcely ten parents in a hundred who know how to properly bring up their offspring, having no discrimination themselves, they exercise none to their children's advantage by studying their dispositions. All are treated similarly, the sensitive disposition suffers alike the pains and penalties of those of a more robust nature. Such a course long persisted in would ruin a sensitive nature and make miserable its possessor during life. Make life

happy for them. Be yourself happy that they may catch happiness from you. Show by your actions as well as by words, that you love them and feel an interest in their welfare, and next to their health, let education engage your best attention, you cannot recompense them by any future consideration the want of it. And having brought them to vigorous manhood, having launched them successfully upon life's tempestuous ocean, you have done your duty, no more than duty, and have given them a heritage fit for any one."

"By jove, I think that would make a very good subject for my next poem."

Mrs. Simkins remained silent, what his harangue about children had to do with her, or why he touched upon the matter at all was something which puzzled her to understand. She had no children, never had had any, and in all human probability never would have any, her sensitive spirit was wounded by the delivery of these remarks, and had she known for a certainty that he so meant it, she could have experienced no greater pleasure than that of opening on him in her most vituperative manner; as it was, though she said nothing, her estimation of Tibbins, as a gentleman, had considerably fallen, and she so expressed it in her countenance.

"May I inquire if your sister is still living?"

"I alone survive of all our family," replied Mrs. Simkins giving vent to a deep drawn sigh.

After a few moments reflection, during which he

audibly murmured "The last of the family" he said. "Ah, what a theme is death for a poet to dilate upon. Truly, we labor today only for those of tomorrow."

"Do you know, I will make it the argument of my next poem, that, and the subject of children, and lest they slip my memory, I will jot them down now in my memorandum book, the book in which I write my prescriptions," and suiting the action to the word, he took a book from his pocket, and at once entered the words therein.

"And so you write poetry as well as prescriptions do you doctor?"

"Better, much better, madam. Of the one you already have an example, let me give you now a taste of my quality in the other."

Mrs. Simkins smiling, excused herself.

"As the immortal William has said of greatness, so may Thomas Tibbins say of poetry. Some are born with the gift of poetry. Some acquire poetry by purchase. And some have poetry thrust upon them."

"The more fools they. Now doctor, what is the proportion of mankind, do you suppose, who imagine themselves to be poets?"

"Imagine themselves poets, you have said, well, and oft we do so without thinking, when thought and effort bring with them no satisfactory results. Imagine is good, the phrase is well formed. You might bury those who at some period in their lives

have not imagined themselves poets, and writers and never miss them."

"And pray doctor, wherein does poetry differ from other forms of expression used in writing?"

"In a musical sense."

"Music in words?"

"There is music in all things, to him who has ears to hear, and a soul to appreciate. Now with me, such is the genius with which I am endowed, the making of poetry is the mere matter of so placing my words as to get out of them all the music there's in them, and this I do with a facility truly marvelous."

"I have heard merit is modest," remarked Mrs. Simkins, "And stands not at the open window but peeps thro' the blinds and sees, unseen, 'Tis an offense in our day, but not in you, doctor. You'll ne'er be hanged for it on a Friday."

"Never be hanged for what? madam."

"Your modesty, doctor."

"Madam, these interruptions, and the severing of the threads of discourse, I like not. What we are, we are, and still must be, in spite of sin, or Sunday. Modesty's a myth, or if existent, most lacked of him most preached. If I blow my own horn, 'tis because 'tis a good horn to blow, and I blow it good, no one will blow it for me, Besides, three good and salutary reasons will I give why I should blow it, and here's for you."

"Let's hear them?"

"First, it promotes content in the blower, that's

myself. Content means health, which, Heaven be praised, I have. Health conduces to longevity, which I hope to attain. So, doing no man ill, I will blow my horn till my cheeks crack, or the bellows no longer blow."

"'Tis a merry world indeed had one but the eye to discern it," sighed Mrs. Simkins.

"Ah, but there was one man, and one only, as I was about to tell you, at the mention of whose name I cheerfully doff my hat—the great Leonardo—a genius so colossal that it absorbed all arts, all sciences—a genius in a word, that stopped at nothing, not even at the moving of mountains, and the performing of other wonderful acts such as would startle those of our day even to think of."

"Could move mountains?"

"By his own tell, yes. Yet for aught I have ever heard to the contrary, the mountains still occupy the sites on which Dame Nature in her goodness placed them."

"I had never heard of the great man you speak of, but to return to poetry, tell me, why this desire to be what one is not? What nature never intended one to be? Why not speak in plain words what one has to say, and be done with it."

"In dealing with your fishmonger, and on other such occasions, yes, but let us not always look with eyes to the earth; let us at times forget our sordid environment, and soaring heavenward saunter as it were, in company of the gods."

"And Goddesses I suppose? I should like to catch my husband sauntering in such an atmosphere. Your fund of knowledge is a very extensive one isn't it, doctor? If I may use the expression, you know it all!" said Mrs. Simkins with a half sneer.

"Not all, madam. I have yet to learn why some persons persist in going backward, when going forward is so much easier."

Mrs. Simkins, remained in deep thought a few moments, and then said, "perhaps it is because they want to" a reason which seemed to her to be entirely satisfactory.

A lull now ensued in the conversation between them during which each looked at the other with eyes, and with a countenance, expressive of anything but admiration.

Having spent several days in rest and recuperation Mrs. Simkins now had no anxiety as to the outcome of her condition, on the contrary, she herself said she was feeling as well as she ever had felt in the whole course of her life, a fact which was manifesting itself hourly in increasing assertiveness, and desire not to be crossed in her opinions. Tibbins realized the difficulty he was likely soon to experience in his efforts to keep her confined within the limits of her own chamber, failing which, he resolved to relieve her of his MSS., and his own presence at once, and return with Mrs. Worthington, and the others to their own home.

"Not that I desire to take it up," remarked Mrs.

Simkins sardonically, resuming the conversation, "but don't you honestly believe I could easily acquire poetry?"

"If you mean indite poetry, madam, I am compelled to say it would be necessary that you be reincarnated."

"Mercy! what's that?"

"Born to this world again, madam, and with a make up very different from that with which you are now invested."

"Well! every man to his taste, or lack of taste as perhaps I should say, now, my husband has an acquaintance who like yourself is much given to scribbling, I have never seen the fellow, to know him, but I understand he entertains no friendly feeling for our sex, and particularly for me. So far as I can learn, his poetry—as he calls it—has never done him any good, and it never will. No publisher ever has accepted a manuscript from him for publication, and yet the dull goose, I am told, still continues to write in the hope that he may yet be able to bring his stuff before the public, and make a name for himself. Ha! Ha! Ha! Did you hear that, doctor, make a name for himself."

Tibbins himself, relishing the situation, laughed heartily, and said "What a fool he must be."

"Do you know" said Mrs. Simkins, "I think all such fellows a little unsettled in their minds and ought to be looked after."

"There isn't the least doubt of it, madam; pray, what sort of a man is he?"

"Of the villainous sort" answered Mrs. Simkins quickly, and with much severity.

"What's his name?"

"His name comports well with his personality. Tibbins he calls himself."

"Tibbins! Tibbins!" said he, repeating the name several times very slowly, "why I think I know him."

"Very likely you do, doctor, but no good of him, I am sure."

Tibbins

"A woman hater, and a vilifier
Of the sacred name of wifehood.
Is it not so?"

Mrs. Simkins

"The same, the very same."

Tibbins

"I know him well, a compound of big and little rascalities."

Mrs. Simkins

"That, or anything that please you, so it point to rascality."

Tibbins

"Boundless in vanity, he dresses oddly,
And in speech and action assumes an eccentricity
To draw eyes to himself."

Mrs. Simkins

"The self-same fellow in good truth."

Tibbins

"This, Heaven forgive him, he calls genius."

Mrs. Simkins

"Hang him, and all like him, he has come between me and my husband often, that I am sure of, and it would please me to see him just once. I have forbid my husband having further acquaintance with him. A past redemption rascal truly. Let him not let me catch him."

Tibbins

"A frequenter of taverns and a drinker
Of brain-befogging beverages."

Mrs. Simkins

"Let him go where he will, and drink what he will,
The Mischief-Making Meddler."

Tibbins

"An argumentative, and windy fellow,
A Niggard, one who would scant his breath,
If breath were purchasable, and pay in promises."

Mrs. Simkins

"What more about him.
So he come not between me and my husband,
All's one."

Tibbins

"Truth is to him a vice, a lie a virtue,
And of his honesty I can but say,
What he can't lift, that, he can't take away.
Did you note the rhyme? Poetry, like love, will out
Do what one may to squelch it."

Mrs. Simkins

"Will you never have done of him, and of poetry?"

Tibbins

..

"A Jail-deserving rascal. A bigamist,
Three wives he has as true as he has one.
Two squat, the other tall."

Mrs. Simkins

"Three wives! The monster!
Who may know a man? I thought him single,
So 'twas always said. A lying world.
Three wives?"

Tibbins

"Three, madam, three on good authority,
Dame Gossip whispers it, and whispers too,
How e'er she came to know it—That he in sleep,
Offense most villainous—awakes the night with snor-
ing."

Mrs. Simkins

"Let him snore, or what he will, hang him.
No more about him, rogue,
A pretty example he for my husband, in sooth,
Every man comes to his deserts at last,
Tis only a matter of time."

Tibbins

"If he to sulphurous regions be committed,
—Whereto his sins most strongly do adjudge him—
Chaos and he will go in company,
And pandemonium will thenceforth be
A synonym for peace,
He'll slip the hounds of hell, Confound Confusion,

Steal from the devil his prerogative,
And thro' the roaring gulfs of Acheron
Scourge him in terror fleeing.
You do not know him, Madam, so well as I."

Mrs. Simkins

"Have you a brother, doctor?"

Tibbins

"A brother, I'm not so favored.
Why, madam, do you ask?"

Mrs. Simkins

"How much a man may like another look,
In all his outward and most visible parts,
As face and stature, action and utterance,
Is shown in you to him."

Tibbins

"To whom, in the name of goodness?"

Mrs. Simkins

"To this same fellow that we now do speak of."

Tibbins

"To him! To Tibbins!"

Mrs. Simkins

"Most true, it is,—unless description do itself belie—
A remarkable resemblance."

Tibbins

"Resemblance to him! a counterpart! May this be so.
I prefer to look like myself alone."

At this moment, Mrs. Worthington, bringing a cup of steaming broth, entered the room, and put a stop to further conversation. Tibbins retired. Mrs. Worthington had been very assiduous in her attention to

the wants of Mrs. Simkins since she came there, and had spent much time in her company, indeed she had so ingratiated herself in her esteem that that lady had opened her bosom to her in a manner she had never been known to do before.

Until now, she made no allusion to her dream, to the ghost of the unfortunate lady, who, for jealousy had poisoned her husband, and gone mad in consequence.

It had given her much thought and no little anxiety. Mrs. Worthington laughed at the idea and tried to dissuade her from all consideration of it. Mrs. Simkins finally asked what interpretation might be put upon it? Mrs. Worthington was forced to acknowledge her own utter inability to interpret dreams, but added, that her servant Betty had a "Dream Book", or "Oracle" which in all probability would throw some light upon it. Being urgently requested to consult the "Oracle", Mrs. Worthington went downstairs at once, and communicated to Tibbins and Simkins the conversation that had ensued between them.

The first named of these two gentlemen who was never at a loss for an idea, suggested that Mrs. Worthington should explain the dream as signifying that Mr. Simkins having undergone undue excitement and anxiety by reason of his wife's excessive jealousy would finally become crazy.

To this proposition, Mrs. Worthington with some

hesitation assented, and returned to the "sick" chamber.

For the first time since her illness the patient had over-ruled the "Doctor's" directions and absented herself from it. Impatient at Mrs. Worthington's long absence she herself had gone to the library in hope of finding there some work explanatory of dreams. In this she was unsuccessful but seeing several rolls of manuscript "encumbering the table" unceremoniously consigned them to the flames.

The life work, the hope, the very existence of the would be immortal "poet" had ascended, not in a halo of glory, but in smoke. Mrs. Simkins unwittingly had had her revenge.

She listened to Mrs. Worthington's interpretation of her dream in silence, which was only broken by Tibbins who now entered. Mrs. Worthington excused herself and left the room. Tibbins at once commenced to pace the floor and exhibit indications of great mental perturbation.

"What's the matter, Doctor?"

"Would I had been spared this" muttered he audibly, paying no attention to her and still pacing the floor.

"What's happened?"

"I would of all things this had been the last."

"Would what had been the last?" cried Mrs. Simkins, following after him, up and down the room.

"Madam," said Tibbins, turning suddenly and confronting the lady who was almost floored by the col-

lision. "Will you please try to compose yourself. It is dreadful. Very dreadful to contemplate but compose yourself I beseech you."

"Doctor" demanded she in a loud voice. "If anything has happened that concerns me let me know it."

"If I must tell you, your husband has"—

"Eloped"

"Worse, much worse, he's gone, madam, gone."

"Gone where?"

"In his head, quite gone in his head, madam."

"Heavens" ejaculated Mrs. Simkins, looking wildly at him, and falling helplessly into a chair.

"Heaven's will be done" responded Tibbins, shaking his head sympathetically, and taking up a position beside her he commenced to stroke her hair softly, as an added expression of his sympathy. "Don't let your husband's misfortune operate as a detriment to your own recovery."

"Is there no hope?"

Tibbins, averting his eyes, offered no reply.

Mrs. Simkins was in a daze. Her dream had been realized sooner, much sooner than she anticipated. The "Oracle" had indeed spoken truth.

Mrs. Simkins.

"I now remember a certain strangeness in him,
When I did see him last."

Tibbins.

"Ill fortune comes to all men in their time
And when it comes let's place it 'gainst the many

Of Fortune's favors granted.
So shall we strike a balance and so be
The better reconciled.
But why should Fortune be for all ills blamed
And not ourselves in whom oft lie
Both cause and remedy—
Would we would use it wisely.
In this philosophy I live that I
From ills received do profit much thereby,
When did you see him last?"

Mrs. Simkins.

"Twas yesternoon, then he did come to see me."

Tibbins.

"Twas then the fit possessed him
And has since grown
To what it is. I too observed it
For the first time then."

Mrs. Simkins.

"How is he affected, doctor?"

Tibbins.

"At times 'tis but a mild and harmless lunacy,
And manifests itself in such like acts
As sitting motionless, with folded arms,
An hour at a stretch. Mute at such time he is,
While his drooped head in seeming thought absorbed,
Rests on his breast."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Poor, dear Septimus."

Tibbins.

"From this abstraction will nothing turn him

While yet the fit is on, when starting suddenly
In dire affright, as at some monster seen,
He gives his eyes to Heaven, his knees to the floor,
And shaking like a leaf at autumn time,
In supplication, raises both his hands.
That done, his lips, blanched as his face with fear,
In rapid motion mutters words on words,
But of their import I could nothing learn
So mixed and senseless was his utterance.
At other times, in loud and threatening tones,
'Bella' he cries."

Mrs. Simkins.

"I am 'Bella'. 'Twas thus he called me
In the early days of our marriage."

Tibbins.

"'Bella' again he cries, and seizes that
Which he supposes 'Bella'."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Seizes what?"

Tibbins.

"A cushion, which in his fury with exultant shout
He tears to tatters, and wildly throws
The shreds about him."

Mrs. Simkins.

"So had he done with me, had I been there."

Tibbins.

"'Tis very certain."

Mrs. Simkins.

"What's to be done?"

Tibbins.

"Listen—His fury unabated, next he throws
The chairs around, upsets the sofa,
And topsy turvy the table turns."

Mrs. Simkins.

"He must be looked to at once.
Is it now the full of the moon?"

Tibbins.

"It is. Let me inform you further—
Jealousy is responsible for this, he cries."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Jealousy in whom?"

Tibbins.

"The very words I asked him, and answer got,
'Bella' four times repeated, then adds he,
Woman's but mortal, and all things have an end.
What has been done can sure be done again."

Mrs. Simkins.

"What did he mean by that?"

Tibbins.

"Nay, who knows."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Was it not a threat, think you?"

Tibbins.

"It savors of a threat, indeed."

Mrs. Simkins.

"And would seem to show he was not wholly irresponsible."

Tibbins.

"Sane at times, at most but half-moon mad."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Madmen you know are not at all times mad."

Tibbins.

"Men drunk, in sleep, and in madness speak,
Truly their minds."

Mrs. Simkins.

"So has he done in this."

Tibbins.

"What one would do,
Must by himself be done,
And to none other trusted."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Did he say that?"

Tibbins.

"Word for word as I have spoken it."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Ere it be too late,
Twere best we bind him hand and foot,
And notify the keeper."

Tibbins.

"Leave him to me,
And to those sedatives which I will minister
To bring him to himself. If in four days
I not remove the incubus which now oppresses him,
I am no doctor, and willingly will forfeit
—The best part of every man—my reputation.

Can I speak more

To set your fears at rest? I do not think so.
Or say I fail, we still may do as now

You do propose, consign him to a cell,
A whip and keeper."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Let it be so. Till then let us be watchful.
Did he speak more?"

Tibbins.

"Much more. The mood upon him he did babble on
A full hour by the clock."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Of what, pray?"

Tibbins.

"Of you, of jealousy and of the moon,
Whose inmate gleefully he vowed he knew,
And that he himself no less a person was
Than uncle to the King.

 This, whispering, he in
Confidence conveyed, and bade me not
Divulge it."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Madness itself gone mad.
Let me know all."

Tibbins.

"Madam, I will. Tis meet you should know all.
Thus then again he spake; 'The time will come
When Doll shall have her own'."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Poll was it not?"

Tibbins.

"No madam, 'twas Doll."

Mrs. Simkins.

“‘Doll,’ that’s Dolly, a woman’s name.
When Dolly shall have her own, her own, That’s him-
self.

The time will come when Dolly shall have him.

There’s poison in the words,
Woman hath made him mad.”

Tibbins.

“Be assured it is so. Look,
Here is a letter from his pocket taken
By me this afternoon,
Tis one of many that I found upon him,
From, and addressed to women. Read for yourself,
And let your pity, not your censure, fall
On this most weak, poor man. Man is but man,
When all is said and done.”

Mrs. Simkins.

“Give me the letter.”

Most Incomparable and Sweet Lady:

Wonder not that I a Gentleman, and a stranger to
you, should thus address you. Construe it not into a
lightness in me, for such it is not. Ask me not what
it is but let thine own heart whisper you that tender-
est of words love, for that, Oh! most amiable lady,
I do in all the sincerity of an honorable affection,
protest it is.

Oh, the pangs of an unrecognized love do so trans-
form me I am not what I was and that I am I am not,
nor anything for long so sudden changeful are the
doubts and hopes of love’s expectancy.

But Heaven is gracious and you kind lady are Heaven, so will I pray you will accord me the favor of thine eye and rest me supremely happy. You in whom beauty first saw light and will with you depart forever.

In lieu of lips, thus do I kiss my hands to you and bid you adieu.

Ever your adoring,

SEPTIMUS SIMKINS.

Mrs. Simkins.

"Oh! Monster! Monster!

Now are my suspicions at their very worst
In full confirmed."

Tibbins.

"Honor, Alas! is dead,
And now awaits, in virginal robes besmirched
The last sad rites, the knell and burial."

Mrs. Simkins.

"I am amazed, and know not what to think,
Or speak, or how to act
In this ordeal, to me the most severe
That yet to woman came.
Oh, that man might be
That which at times he seems,
In virtues perfect. Wifhood then
Were an unceasing joy."

Tibbins.

"If man's opinion be but born to die,
T'were waste of thought to form one.
I had thought, not knowing him
Your husband were an angel."

Mrs. Simkins.

"And so thought I alas! when we were wed,
And so think woman all."

Tibbins.

"Alas! the world, how oft we do mistake,
And never more so than in respect of man,
Whose visible visage, and whose mind unseen,
Oft stand at variance—but Heaven wills
Man can but run his course
And then an end."

Mrs. Simkins.

"A bitter end unto a bitter act."

Tibbins.

"You are looking ill."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Who could look well, her husband's deeds being ill,
And he himself gone mad."

Tibbins.

"I must give a change of medicine
To meet this new condition."

Mrs. Simkins.

"I'll no more medicine. A mind contented
Is the only medicine that I now need,
Not yours the power to give."

Tibbins.

"I was ever

Tender, kind and soft of heart,
And could not of all things composedly view
A woman's tribulations. Thus was it,
For love of woman and her special good,

Came I to be a doctor.
His is a soul unmerciful, indeed,
Unfitted for the haunts of beast or man,
Who can upon a suffering woman look,
And no compassion feel.
Heaven send you courage, and increase of strength
To support you in affliction."

Mrs. Simkins.

"When fortune frowns, I face to face will meet her
And if at times from her successive strokes
I seem to falter, be well assured my strength
Will be renewed, and I again confront her."

Tibbins.

"It is an admirable and sustaining spirit."

Mrs. Simkins.

"No, rather wish the affliction be removed
From which I suffer, than me the strength to bear it,
Which granted, the affliction still remaining,
I am but little better.

"Put medicine to its use.

Have you no pill, no powder, lotion or potion,
Or other remedy, be it by what name known,
Which taken inwardly, or outwardly applied,
Will from the seat of trouble, the trouble take,
And quiet a mind disturbed."

Tibbins.

"Desperate maladies,
Require desperate remedies to check them,
Ere they grow chronic.

I have a medicine of my own Compounding,

A secret. No mountebank sold it me. Tis yet un-
tested

Save as an experiment upon a maniac
Who straightway was relieved. Tis powerful,
And dangerous in the hands
Of the unskilled. This will I try upon him cautiously.
He can but die at most, as all men must—
To him a blessing that lives a living death.
Let us have hope—”

Mrs. Simkins.

“Hope. If money and the science wherein You’re
tutored

Working together, assure not man his wits,
Of what use then is either?”

Tibbins.

“Money—”

Mrs. Simkins.

“If the issue do but give the proof
To your expressed opinion
That you in four days will effect a cure—”

Tibbins.

“Did I say four?”

Mrs. Simkins.

“As I do live you said so.”

Tibbins.

“I will not change it.”

Mrs. Simkins.

“Now am I happy
And will my word, my very honor give,

Twill not from such a cause occur again.
Four days is it not?"

Tibbins.

"I have said."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Some say some doctors
Have one opinion for the night, another for the day,
Holding not long to either."

Tibbins.

"I am not of these."

Mrs. Simkins.

"Doctors that in the reach
And grasp of their most vital functions
Should be so founded, fixed and well confirmed
That ailing nature, at her worst, might laugh
Her enemy away."

Tibbins.

"Give me leave. You spoke of money.
Money, madam, is the one factor in this world's business.

With money one may accomplish much, without it
nothing.

Money commands respect, while virtuous age and
wisdom

Go unheeded, Nay! are often scoffed at.
For money we live, breathe, and perform each act in
life.

For money we marry, and command
Cupid himself beside.

Have you a suit at court money will buy it for you.

Merit is measured by the length of the purse.
In short, madam, not to have money
Is to be quite out of this world's regard, but I have
Yet to learn that money can purchase contentment
Or furnish brains to fools, and muttering madmen."

Mrs. Simkins eyed him curiously, as if she thought that he too had caught the infection, possibly from her husband.

Taking out his memorandum book he entered the word "Money" and again returned it to his pocket. "If you wish, when tractable, I will bring your husband before you so you may judge for yourself of his pitiable condition."

"Heavens! Do you suppose I would expose my life to the uncertain humors of a madman? I could never think of such a thing, and for fear he should find his way to my room I'll have it doubly locked and bolted. Nay, more, I'll keep a guard without my chamber door that he be barred from entrance."

"You will find him at times as harmless as a kitten."

"I will not find him at times as harmless as a kitten for I will not see him to find him so. I will do everything for him. I will spend money to effect his recovery, but I'll not see him."

Tibbins again told her he would use his best skill in her husband's behalf and hoped to be able to make good his promise by the expiration of the time named.

The sharp click of the bolt, as he closed the door, gave assurance of Mrs. Simkins' determination to secure herself against any surreptitious entrance of the supposititious madman.

CHAPTER XII

To heaven peace, where peace alone doth dwell,
Here is no peace, no known tranquility.

"The Disconsolate Monarch."

THUS far everything had proceeded satisfactorily, Tibbins had not only succeeded in confining Mrs. Simkins to her room, despite her feeling well and desire to leave it, but by strategem—Mrs. Worthington called it knavery—had actually enkindled within the bosom of that lady a feeling of love—such as it was—toward her husband.

He, as yet, was unable to determine how the matter would terminate, but was not without hope of bringing it to a successful issue, thus enabling himself and Mrs. Worthington to emerge from it without that discredit which would otherwise attach to them.

Having overcome the fear which was the occasion of her coming here, Mrs. Worthington was now anxious to return to her own home. "I cannot see what good can be accomplished," said she, "by remaining any longer. All the good that can be done has been done, Mr. Simkins has had a few days respite and that is all it will ever amount to. One cannot cure jealousy in man or woman any more than one can restore to this world those who in the very nature of mundane mysteries have departed from it."

"Well! Well, Mrs. Worthington," said Tibbins, good naturedly. "I have ever tried to please you, and

shall still strive to do so. Please say no more about it and I promise within two days to be back with you again in your own home."

A feeling of friendship which had long existed between them had ripened on Tibbins' part into a feeling of intense love, which was not without its reciprocal response in that lady. This reciprocation of feeling had been noticed by Fanny and Betty, and particularly since they came to Mrs. Simkins' house, but they had given no intimation of their knowledge to either of them.

So far as the lady is concerned it is not to be wondered that she should desire marriage, most women do, and she was no exception to the general rule, but that Tibbins should seek it, in the face of his many arguments against it, was at least remarkable and can only be accounted for by the fact, that love knows no barrier. His opposition, certainly, had proven no bar to Cupid's entrance, once that chubby faced little rascal had seen fit to do so.

"Fanny, my dear," said Mrs. Worthington, "you and Betty had both better go to bed and get a good night's rest."

"I don't want to go to bed."

"Yes, but you must, the day has been a very long one, and you look very tired."

"To day has been no longer than yesterday was, and I never have gone to bed till ten o'clock. Besides, I'm not sleepy and couldn't sleep if I went to bed."

"Fanny," exclaimed Mrs. Worthington assuming

an air of austerity, "do you hear, I say go to bed and get your rest, come, there's a good girl, I shall follow you almost immediately."

Having kissed her a "sweet good night," she fully expected to see her retire at once, but Fanny was obdurate, and more than determined, on this occasion, to hold her own.

"If you are going up so soon, why can't I wait till you go? Why! it's only nine o'clock."

"It may be that I shall not go up very soon," spoke up Mrs. Worthington, "I have business with Mr. Tibbins, which may detain me."

"I'm afraid to go into that large room alone."

"Afraid of what, pray?"

"Ghosts."

"Foolish girl! at your age and afraid of ghosts, tell me, did you ever see a ghost?"

"No, I never did."

"And you never will, Fanny."

"Mrs. Simkins saw one." Tibbins and Mrs. Worthington both laughed heartily. After a little persuasion in which Tibbins joined, Fanny was presumed to have relinquished her fears, and having been kissed another "sweet good night," departed, with Betty, from the room, instead of going to bed, however, they took up a position in an ante-room, where unobserved they could see and hear everything that transpired between them.

"And now," said Tibbins, drawing his chair close beside that of Mrs. Worthington. "We are alone,

and to be alone with one one loves is to enjoy a state of bliss next only to heaven itself."

Mrs. Worthington drew a deep sigh.

"My dear Mrs. Worthington, no, I will not call you by so distant a name. I will call you Sarah."

"Call me Sarah," simpered Mrs. Worthington assuming a bashfulness she never felt.

"My own dear Sarah," "no I will not call you Sarah either. Sarah is cold, too cold a name for love as warm as mine."

"Call me Sally," again simpered she, hanging her head in mock modesty.

"And after all," said Tibbins, drawing his chair still closer and placing his arm gently round her, "more than the name, the substance, 'tis we love. Sally my own sweet Sally, witness in me the very pangs of love, even such love as only poets feel when love inspired.

Let me not live, thy love lamenting,
Life were as death, thou not consenting,
Sweetheart mine alone to be—
Roses genial June adorning,
—After hoary winters scorning—
Bear no beauty such as thee.
Come, my sweeting,
Let thy greeting
Breathe this ecstasy to me."

Had Mrs. Worthington been composed of inani-

mate material, she couldn't have more unconcernedly yielded herself up to the now energetic, and body-contracting embraces of "the poet."

"And who is she you love?"

"Oh! sweet simplicity! Who but your own sweet self could conjure up, a love so deep as mine.

"Oh! Mr. Tibbins!"

"Call me not Tibbins, nor more 'Mister' me, call me by some sweet name that I may know by what you call me, that your love is so, call me Tommy."

"You have my pity."

"Have I your pity, then you love me too."

"What is love, Mr. Tibbins."

"Ah, the oft repeated and yet to be answered question, but this reminds me, do you know I have with me some recently indited poetry on love, tis writ at my muse's bidding who wooed, kissed and wrapped the mantle of her effulgence about me and here it is."

"The mantle?"

"Sweet one, the poetry."

"I have heard of the muse being wooed, but never of wooing."

"My dear, most persons have much to learn."

"Very true, Mr. Tibbins, and as for myself, I would gladly exchange for knowledge of those things with which I am not acquainted, all the knowledge I now possess, and be the wiser for the bargain."

"But, come, let us return to poetry and to love."

"Where is poet can define
That most potent power divine
Which does sway the human breast
Taking from man all his rest;
Yes, and lacking hope to pine.

"Tell, oh tell, the reason why
Fair maids do so often sigh
For sight of the longed-for face
And the heart to heart embrace
Which not coming they do cry.

"Love it is and love will be
Love thro' all eternity.
Sweet is love as Seraphs' song
Borne on Heaven's airs along
Poet answer, come, tell me
What for Love's sake, love can be."

"What think you of the poetry?"

"The lines jingle very prettily, truly."

"And of the poet?"

"Let me think, well I may say of him as of most men, that his virtues are very kindly disposed, and do not burden him, and as of most men that his faults are not so numerous nor so confirmed as to be past mending. Indeed one might search him out in a crowd and never find him for any predominant quality to be found in him. Are you listening?"

"Intently."

"Further, he thinks well of himself, a desirable thing to do if not overdone, for in so thinking he is under no obligation to another for a compliment often as begrudgingly as with favor given. He woes his muse, as he calls it, often, an innocent pastime enough, which keeps him employed for the time being at least, but not always out of mischief, and while he has profited thereby only to the extent of his own pleasure his poetry cannot assuredly be said to have done anybody any particular harm, so let him woo his muse still and hereafter keep out of mischief. Are you still listening?"

"To an angel."

"Of his personal attractions or detractions, of which all men have some, I shall say nothing. Let him go to his looking glass for them, an ever convincing argument of the fallacy of pride except to woman. That he means well goes without saying which is not saying he always does well, yet take him for all in all he is a man a woman might fall in love with if she were strongly inclined to love, and man were not a commodity spoiling on an overstocked matrimonial market. Will you hear more?"

"I could listen your sweet voice the night long and wish it were never morning, for you speak with the lips of love and can breathe out nothing but prettiness and poesies.

"Love's ears are partial and attuned to hear in words discordant heavenly harmony—And yet you have not told me what love is."

"And so can no man."

"Nor woman?"

"Nor woman either."

"Shall we always remain in darkness?"

"Let us not worry about what love is, or whence it comes, but be happy in the thought that we possess it each for other. Let us now take up the question of money and of living, for these necessary albeit annoying adjuncts to existence are yet to be considered for love you know is as a condiment most satisfying when accompanied by substantial dishes."

"Did you say money?"

"If I do not abhor the name beyond all things else in the world may I be gibbeted, yes, and left hanging, too, till my poor bones bare as old Hacklehair the barbers poll, shine dangling in the moonlight. Money, money and nothing but money. 'Tis every man's cry and woman's too and has been since and before the time of old Methuselah. Why, one would think its possession meant salvation, and the lack of it everlasting perdition, of many things restrictive, a man may not eat, drink, smoke or talk more than is for his own good, these have their limitations, but in the pursuit of pelf he glories in riding his hobby to the devil regardless of self, health and his own happiness. Thank Heaven we of our ilk have little love for it knowing as we do that money is an enemy to genius and determinedly bent on her destruction. But let me not speak further of this now, for after all without money there can be no commodity, and a few

pounds stowed away make for a stormy day, so let us be pleased my love that you, provident yet generous have enough in store to serve us both."

"Enough for both, my money?"

"Yours, we will get along."

"I should be loth indeed to be called upon to provide all."

"You shall not, I've yet some money left, and were it more you should as readily the handling have as if 'twere yours alone."

••• I must tell you something.
Passing the other night your Chamber door,
Which you had left part open, I heard your voice,
And thinking, as well I might, to me you spoke,
For well I knew no person then was with you,
I stopped and listened. Looked in upon and saw you
sitting there,
Your face being from me turned.
Your limbs were to their fullest length outstretched.
Arms dangling by your side, and on your breast
Your head so loosely hung, that it did seem
That but for such support it must have fallen.
Then did you heave a long and heavy sigh
And these words spoke:

'Farewell to all my money, all is gone
And not a friend but Simkins now to call on
Who poorer is than I.
Thus is it to be married, thus to be
A fool to woman, who having all, keeps all.' "

“Did I say that? I said it dreaming then,
I count no man poor save only he who thinks himself
poor,
Nor rich, if he be not satisfied with that he has.
Content is all, and I am well content,
Or shall be, Love, when I may call you mine.”

But enough of this, suffice it to say, Tibbins continued his protestations of love for some time, a love, which he declared was as deep as the sea, high as the moon, bright as the sun, and broad as the universe—indeed, such love as only a poet can feel was his for Sally Worthington, who, in her own artful manner withheld all expression of her own feelings in order to draw out those of the “poet”.

He recounted the enduring fame which their marriage would bring her name, in comparison with which that of Anne Hathaway would be as nothing, and added, “That, he would not only leave her his second best bed but all other beds and property, both real and personal, of which he should die seized and possessed.” Manifestly this offer had no weight with Mrs. Worthington who realized Tibbins had already spent the substance of his Uncle’s legacy, and being by trade a poet merely he would be extremely lucky if he had any bed to leave except that on which he took his final departure in the poorhouse, and in consideration also of the distance to be traveled she was willing to forego all thought of fame—that *Ignis fatuus* of fools—and allow Anne to remain in undis-

puted possession of her exalted position. No, love it was and love only which prompted her promise to give Tibbins' offer of marriage serious consideration and make known her decision at an early day.

Unable to restrain his joy, he fell on his knees before her, and seizing her hands kissed them in his most fervent manner. Fanny uttered an involuntary "Oh!" which brought Tibbins to his feet at once, and his sweetheart as well.

The little terrier, at this moment, came running to Mrs. Worthington and took upon himself the blame for the noise they had just heard. Thus quieted, they drew their chairs closer to the fire. Having now no secret to withhold from Tibbins, she commenced to unbosom herself at once of her history, which was, in effect as follows:

Born in London of wealthy parents, her father a banker, she had been highly educated and introduced into society at an early age. There she made the acquaintance of a certain fictitious Italian Count, by name, Fraudino—an audacious adventurer—of whom she became wholly enamored, and whom, to forestall the alliance which her parents had determined on, she eloped with and married.

Traveling to Florence, on the outskirts of which City he falsely represented himself as possessing a large and beautiful estate, he placed her in wretched apartments, stripped her of her jewels, the valued gifts of many friends in England, which he soon

lost at the gaming table, and commenced a course of treatment toward her at once insulting and abusive.

Deprived of all means, he deserted her and returned to England, where meeting soon after with the young gentleman to whom her father had promised her hand in marriage, and who had long been in search of him, he received a challenge to combat which he accepted, and was mortally wounded.

From Florence with the assistance of strangers she returned to London, only to conceal her identity from parents and friends who had discarded her.

Living in an obscure street, she had scarcely been able to subsist on the scanty means which her sewing brought her, and had there given birth to a male infant, the issue of her marriage with the so-called Count her husband.

The infant she had been compelled to place—with a few lines, and a likeness of the “Count” as a means of identity,—in a basket, which she entrusted to the care of a boy, to be placed at the door of a certain foundling asylum, being ill at the time, and unable herself to perform the duty.

Inquiries made at the institution, resulted in the information, that no infant had been found, and further search failed to elicit its whereabouts. The boy to whom it had been entrusted had never returned, and could never afterwards be traced.

Many, many weary days of fruitless search had been hers. While thus engaged she one day met a former lady friend who recognized and accosted her,

and through whose generosity and kindness of heart, she was enabled to purchase the house in which, under the assumed name of "Worthington" she had long lived, and in which, God willing, she hoped to terminate her days, in peace and obscurity. Concluding, she buried her face in her hands, and wept freely.

Tibbins kissed and assured her that he would marry her for sympathy if for no other reason.

At this juncture the door opened suddenly, and Simkins—who had been rumaging among the old effects in the garret—came running in, exclaiming, "I've got 'em, I've got 'em."

"What's the matter," exclaimed both Mrs. Worthington and Tibbins in one voice.

"The proofs, the proofs. The letter, the portrait of my Father," replied Simkins, capering around the room and holding aloft what seemed to be two discolored pieces of paper.

Handing the picture to Tibbins it was shown at once to Mrs. Worthington, who uttered a sharp scream and fell fainting, in Tibbins' arms. Fanny and Betty now came hurriedly into the room.

This was a condition of things entirely unlooked for and puzzled those present to understand.

Recovering, Mrs. Worthington threw her arms around Simkins' neck with the exclamation "My son, my long lost son" and kissed him fervently. Explanation followed explanation in rapid succession.

In the ecstasy of his joy Simkins quite forgot his fears of his wife, quite forgot the relations in which

Tibbins and his newly discovered mother stood to Mrs. Simkins, quite forgot the deception which had been practiced upon her. In fact forgot everything but that he had found in Mrs. Worthington his own mother, and so great was his desire to communicate this information to his wife that he rushed pell mell up stairs, and into her chamber, the door of which she had strangely forgotten to fasten.

Attired in her night gown and cap, Mrs. Simkins lay in a half slumber. Her husband's precipitate entrance, and excited exclamation, that he had found her, startled her, and accepting the situation with a cry of despair, she leaped from her bed, and, rushing downstairs, was soon in the presence of those in the sitting room, breathing heavily, and scarcely able to speak.

Simkins entered a moment or two later.

Believing him still crazy and bent on her destruction she was about to renew her flight to other and safer quarters. Anticipating her intentions Tibbins clasped her by the arm and endeavored to reassure her of her husband's tractability.

Simkins' discovery was made known to her. She congratulated Mrs. Righter, as she called her, on her good fortune and expressed the pleasure which a detailed account of her history would afford her on the morrow. Casting a suspicious glance at her husband, she again returned to her apartment.

On the following morning, Tibbins preparatory to leaving for home entered the library to get his manu-

scripts. They were not where he had left them, somewhat nettled yet not doubting but that he would find them he continued the search, overturning in his now increasing excitement the books and papers around him. Satisfied at last, that they were not there, and wrought to the highest pitch of excitement by their disappearance, he rushed madly downstairs, and throughout the house insisting that he or she had taken them and demanding their whereabouts.

Nobody had taken them. Nobody had even seen them.

His only hope, a forlorn hope at best, was that Mrs. Simkins might have them, rushing into her bed-room he put the question to her in his most excitable manner.

Mrs. Simkins mildly mentioned that several rolls of paper which she found in the library encumbering the table had been thrown by her into the fire.

The mystery of their disappearance was at last made clear. A thunderbolt, had one fallen among them could not have created greater consternation in the mind of the "poet" than did this announcement. Uttering a series of profanities, which will scarcely bear repetition, he fell dazed into a chair, stretched his legs at full length, dropped his chin on his breast, and abandoned himself to utter despair.

"Doctor, I beg you'll pardon me, but really I had no idea they were worth anything."

"Don't call me doctor," cried Tibbins, rising suddenly, "I'm no doctor."

"No doctor!" exclaimed Mrs. Simkins with surprise.

"No," shouted Tibbins, pacing the floor, "no doctor, don't know any more about medicine than you do, and don't want to. I'm a poet, madam, a poet, I say a poet, if you would know it, and my name's Tibbins, Tibbins, do you hear, madam, Tibbins."

"Tibbins, you Tibbins!"

"Yes Tibbins, and be hanged to you."

"Indeed, then Mr. Simkins is not crazy!"

"Not half so crazy as you are."

"And I have been shamefully imposed upon."

"I wish I had poisoned you."

"Oh! you old reprobate!"

"Don't reprobate me, you ugly old thing. I'll smash everything in the room," and suiting the action to the threat he upset a flower stand scattering earth pots, and flowers in indescribable confusion.

"I defy you," cried Mrs. Simkins advancing and assuming her most threatening attitude.

"Do you," said Tibbins, pushing and causing her to fall backward against a washstand which she seized hold of and overturned, drenching herself as she did so. Nothing daunted, and half rising, she seized the handle of the broken water pitcher and hurled it with her greatest force at the head of "the poet." Missing him, and hitting her own portrait it broke the nose of the "counterfeit presentment" and brought down

both frame and canvass. Striking in its fall the back of a chair the canvass was forced from the frame which now stood leaning against the wall as if glad of its separation from so jealous a companion.

"You can't frighten me, you scribbling old fool" sung out Mrs. Simkins, looking round for something portable to lay her hands on. "I'm only too glad to see you, you and your stuff," (making allusion to Tibbins' poetry) "I'll teach you a lesson, you miserable looking old trickster you."

As Mrs. Simkins' anger increased that of Tibbins began to subside, he had not expected to find in her so great a virago, indeed, he would have been satisfied to merely demolish the furniture and other articles in her room as an appeasement to his feelings and then let the matter rest.

He thought it exceedingly uncharitable in her to contest his right to commit this destruction under the circumstances, yet since she had seen proper to do so, and since also that she seemed likely to get the upper-hand of him he was now willing to depart her presence omitting those little formalities of leave taking incidental to punctilious society.

Not so desirous to part company was Mrs. Simkins, who now advanced boldly with a fixed look of determination to do or die. Tibbins quailed and tried to escape. Seizing his long locks from behind she brought him to a sudden stand and sent blow after blow upon his bald pate in rapid succession.

His cries brought everybody hurriedly into the

room. A fortunate circumstance now presented itself; observing her husband among those present, she initiated a hot pursuit of him down the stairs, while Tibbins never ceased running till he reached the highway where he stood awaiting further developments, and cursing the event which caused him to come to this malodorous home of marital infelicity.

Mrs. Worthington, Fanny, Betty and the little terrier soon made their appearance being only too glad to leave the premises on Mrs. Simkins' most explicit invitation.

In consideration of their relationship and of her friendship for Mrs. Worthington, no objection was interposed to that lady, who frequently visited at the old chateau, but Tibbins never crossed her threshold more, while she lived.

True to her nature, Mrs. Simkins, remained until her death the same jealous and obdurate old lady she had ever been. This sad event—which Tibbins declared to be the only infallible cure for jealousy—took place two years subsequent to the events related in the present chapter, and was occasioned by that distressing and most uncommon of all maladies, lockjaw.

Her will, a curiously devised testament, disclosed in full her wishes regarding her funeral—her desire that Simkins as an expression of his bereavement should wear mourning for a period of ten years and remain a widower during his natural existence—that Tibbins be interdicted and prevented from attending her obsequies, and that her age, (as to which she had

misinformed her husband, by just five years) the date of her death and her epitaph be inscribed on her tombstone which she had already taken the precaution to have placed in the village churchyard.

The epitaph which here follows, Mrs. Simkins had selected and slightly altered from a Mss. entitled "The Disconsolate Monarch" which she found in her husband's library—and oh! the strangeness of it, which Tibbins himself had written. A fact which were it possible for her to know would cause her to burst her sepulcher and dance in her winding sheet to the accompaniment of her own anger:

"Gentle her disposition,
Her words like prayers, so measuredly did flow
That all who heard them did upon her look
As on some holy woman."

To Simkins were given absolutely the old house, its contents and the grounds at Haddonhill, all her other property being left in trust for his sole use and benefit, conditioned on his abstaining for all time from all vices of whatsoever kind or nature, and especially from that, to her the greatest of all evils—the society of persons of her own sex. Of the many conditions imposed, one at least was adhered to and followed to the letter. Simkins remained a willing widower until the end.

Her funeral was largely attended, all the neighbors from far and near having crowded thither from motives of curiosity.

From the remarks of the attending minister wherein were extolled the many virtues of the dear departed Simkins received his first knowledge of the grievous loss he had sustained by her removal.

Tibbins, having been united in marriage with Mrs. Worthington became at once not only Simkins' friend, as he had long been, but his father as well, and father and son were once more domiciled under the same roof, as fathers and sons should be, lived a life of harmony as fathers and sons should do—and all within the house where jealousy and discord had long reigned supreme—the house of Simkins, and let me add enjoyed his hobby, that of scribbling poetry to the last, dying full of years, if not of honors, his wife, following him soon after.

Fanny having married, emigrated to America leaving Simkins solitary and alone, and with no alternative but to dispose of the property, which he accordingly did.

Settling once more under brighter auspices in London he soon forgot in the bustle of its busy marts, his previous history, and lived many years, as it were, a new existence.

His library, the accumulation of a life time—he ordered to be sold, and the proceeds thereof, added to his fortune, he bequeathed in the name of "Sweet Charity" to the poor of London.

